ity of Cal
hern Regi
rary Faci

TWO THOUSAND MILES' RIDE

THROUGH

THE ARGENTINE PROVINCES.

VOL. I.

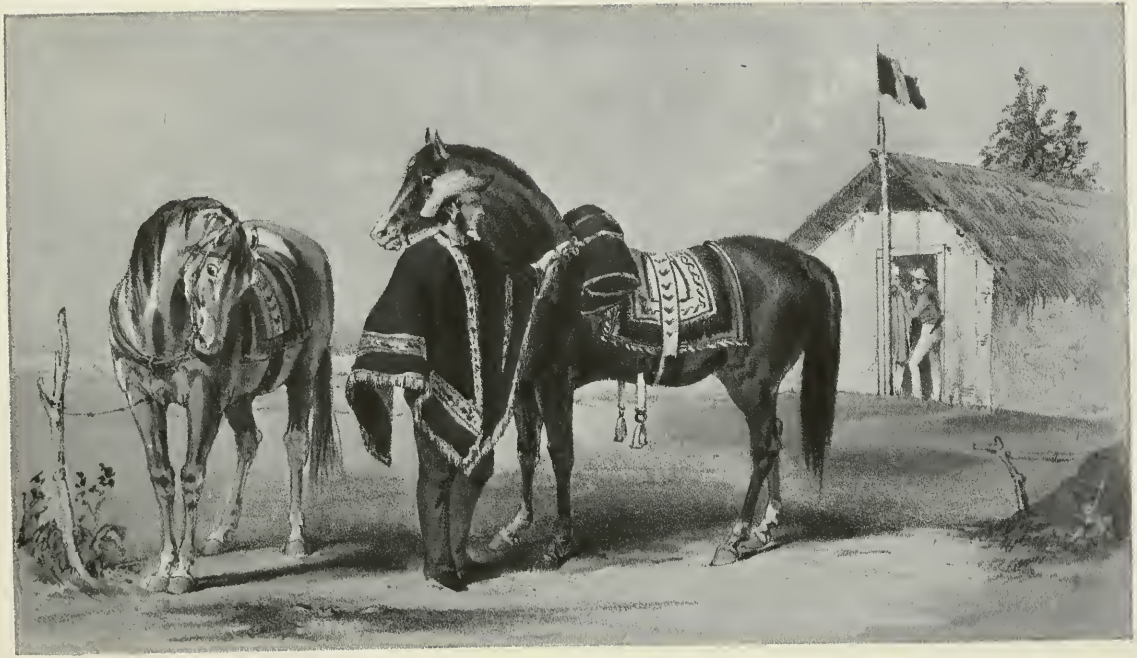
AMS PRESS
NEW YORK

Reprinted from the edition of 1853, London and Bombay
First AMS EDITION published
Manufactured in the United States of America

International Standard Book Number:
Complete set: 0-404-04102-7
Vol. one: 0-404-04103-5

Library of Congress Catalogue Number: 70-128433

AMS PRESS INC.
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10003



Ford & West, lithog

TWO THOUSAND MILES' RIDE

THROUGH

THE ARGENTINE PROVINCES:

BEING AN ACCOUNT OF THE

NATURAL PRODUCTS OF THE COUNTRY, AND HABITS OF THE PEOPLE;

WITH A HISTORICAL RETROSPECT OF

THE RIO DE LA PLATA, MONTE VIDEO, AND CORRIENTES.

By WILLIAM MacCANN,

Author of the "Present Position of Affairs on the River Plate."

"A truthful melange of scenes and circumstances relating to a country personally unknown to the reader, is a mental revel in which he cannot but delight."—G. M.

With Illustrations.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER & CO., 65, CORNHILL.
SMITH, TAYLOR, & CO., BOMBAY.
1853.

PREFACE.

WHILE these volumes have been passing through the press, events have occurred on the River Plate which must appear inexplicable to those not well acquainted with the nature of the country, the character and habits of the people, and the state of political and commercial affairs in the Argentine Provinces.

The downfall of the power of Rosas and the opening of the River Parana for commerce up to Paraguay, naturally raised the hopes of all who deemed the policy of that Dictator inimical to the political freedom and commercial prosperity of the countries on the Plate.

The hostilities now unhappily commenced by Buenos Ayres against General Urquiza, must, however, convince even the bitterest opponents of Rosas, that the causes of this deplorable warfare lie deeper than any system of government or the policy of any dictator.

The following pages will, I hope, tend to throw some light upon this perplexing subject; and though I do not pretend to solve a problem so difficult, I may be found to have furnished facts and information from which others may deduce conclusions, satisfactory or otherwise.

I first arrived in the River Plate in the year 1842; at which time the country was distracted with civil war. My object being the extension of my commercial relations, I informed myself, before leaving England, of the general character of the people amongst whom I had intended to settle; but when I came into actual contact with them, I found just reason to apprehend that amongst communities so unsettled, commerce was not likely to flourish. The inhabitants indeed were so absorbed by the care and anxiety arising out of political convulsions, that they had neither leisure nor disposition to enter upon the peaceful pursuits of agriculture or commerce.

Under such circumstances my first business was calmly to investigate the origin and progress of so much national calamity, that I might be enabled to judge whether these convulsions were likely to have a speedy termination; or whether on the contrary the evils were so deep-rooted and chronic, as to require years, or perhaps generations, for their removal. I entered upon this investigation partly with the view of satisfying myself as to whether I should continue

my connection with the country, and partly to acquire such solid information as would enable me to make correct reports to my mercantile correspondents.

The knowledge of affairs I acquired, and the strong opinions I had formed regarding the position and prospects of the country, induced me, at the suggestion of some friends, to issue in 1846, a small publication; but it was confined to questions purely political.

Having, however, accumulated a variety of information, and formed what appeared to me to be correct views regarding the true policy of the country, both internally and externally, I resolved to publish a larger work; and with a design to render it as full and complete as possible, I extended the range of my observations. For this purpose in 1848, I made a journey to the south of the province of Buenos Ayres, and another journey to the north of that province; and being in search of openings for fresh fields of commerce during both these journeys, self-interest prompted me to be vigilant in my observations and accurate in my judgment. I therefore patiently sought for facts in every quarter; and in this respect was favourably circumstanced, for I had such letters of introduction as gave me access to the highest sources of information in every province I visited.

I entered on the investigation with a sincere desire to arrive at the truth upon every point that came

within the range of my observations; and the same desire has influenced me throughout every page I have written. Had I allowed myself the usual latitude claimed by travellers, I might possibly have thrown more interest into my narrative, and given a higher colouring to the descriptions; but my aim has been to lay before the public a true statement of facts, and such opinions upon political questions as I have myself formed, and which are the result of calm reflection.

My journeys, though exceeding more than two thousand miles, did not extend beyond the Argentine Provinces; but the knowledge I acquired of the Banda Oriental and Paraguay, have enabled me to add some information respecting those countries, from reliable sources.

The political history contained in the second volume, is brought down in a somewhat extended form so as to include the latest events; in order to give a comprehensive and clear view of the present actual position and prospects of the countries on the River Plate.

Birkenhead, Jan. 1853.

CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

Departure from Buenos Ayres—Equestrian traveller's equipments—Church and village of Quilmes—Mr. Clark's farm—Irish labourers—Potato crop and Spanish flies—English hospitality—Value of land, and wages of labourers—Morning scene on the Pampas—Troop of wild horses—Beauty of the verdure—Mounted shepherdess—Horned plovers—Estancia of Mr. Bell—The lazo and the bolas—Horse-breaking—Folding sheep—Ride across the plains—Wild horse of the desert—A pulperia—Patriarchal scene—Price of land—Currency—Value of horse-flesh—Instinct of horses—Manadas—Mode of breeding mules—Native population—Mode of catching partridges—Lazoing a bullock—Colt-breaking—Modes of travelling—Tropilla of horses—Patriarchal family—Scene on the plain—Selecting a tropilla and starting the cavalcade..... page 1

CHAPTER II.

Halt and changing horses—Making for the "clouds"—An extempore deer-hunt—Homely hospitality at an estancia—Native mode of roasting and eating meat—Native riding-boots—A fragrant resting-place—A bull tossing the carcass of a cow—Reception

by the host and hostess of a British estancia—Hospitality as described in Scripture—Danger of losing sheep by inundation—Native well and modes of drawing water—Chascamus Lake, and lovely scene—Native huts and women—Dishonesty of the soldiery—Estancia of Mr. Thwaites at Chascamus—The tropilla missing—Prevalence of horse-stealing—A justice of the peace—Perils of free-speaking—Sheep farms ..... page 38

CHAPTER III.

Prosperity of Irish immigrants, and profits of sheep-breeding—An Irish settler—The river Salado—Trade in nutria-skins—The Cameron estancia—Hospitality of Don Martinez—Village of Dolores—Primitive fire-place and bedstead—Traffic of Indians for mares'-flesh as food—Rustic supper-party, and airy dormitory—Dogs reared with sheep—Mrs. Methvin and her tropilla—Sleeping upon an ant's nest—Arrival at Tandil—A deserted village and ruined church—The Sierra de la Ventana—Rosas' plan for increasing population—Value of land, cattle, and sheep—Remarkable rocking stone—Different species of armadilloes—Fabulous story of an extinct volcano—Fête in commemoration of the independence of the Argentine Confederation—Gaiety and courtesy of the guests..... 69

CHAPTER IV.

A chimney the indication of comfort—Residence and family of Don Ramon Gomez—Disadvantages of want of labourers—Influence of pastoral life on the mind—Effects of night dews on horses—Earnings of Irish labourers, and market for labour—Supper-party in a cook-house—Standard of good housewifery—The reality of Arcadian life—The fork a test of civilization—Asul, the boundary of Indian territory—Expedition of Rosas against the Indians, and his treaty with them—Burning grass on the Pampas—A happy old woman—Cheerfulness a Christian virtue—Indian huts—The commandant of the Indian frontier 93

CHAPTER V.

Tapalqueen—Traffic of the Pampas Indians—Filthy state of their huts—Influence of Colonel Echavaria over the Indians—Native method of weaving—Indian women—Sun-worship and sacrifices—Government of the Indian tribes—Their physiognomy and modes of painting the face—Robust health and youthful aspect of the men—Clothing of men and women—Their toldos or huts of hide—Belief in a good and an evil spirit—Funeral rites and ceremonies—Lasting grief of relatives—Traditionary ideas of a past and future state—Division of the years into months—Celestial portents—Chiefs, or caciques—Crimes and punishments—Military government and mode of warfare—The manchi or medicine-man, and his methods of cure—Forms of wooing and wedding—Polygamy—Servile condition of the wives—Mode of rearing infants—Food and drink—Feasts, dances, and amusements ..... page 109

CHAPTER VI.

Kindness of Colonel Echavaria—Store for supplying Indians—Methods of threshing corn—A flat and dreary waste—Low tone of sexual morality—Deadening influence of vast plains upon the dwellers in them—Lazoing a cow for supper—Keen scent of carrion birds—Bivouac on the plains—Mode of roasting beef on the Pampas—Sleeping in the open air—Vague directions for travellers on the plains—A night's "lodging on the cold ground"—Estancia of Dr. Dick—Value of land—Tidings of a tiger—Troops of wild horses, but none for a traveller to ride—Military exactions and arbitrary tyranny—Negro hospitality and kindness—Sleeping among rats—Estancia and family of the widow Burns—Horses beat to a stand-still—A generous herdsman—Plains covered with sheep—Mr. Handy, an Irish flock-owner—Buying sheep at three-halfpence each—Feeding pigs with mutton—Crossing a swollen river—Review of the journey 133

CHAPTER VII.

Results of observation—The Gaucho, Peon, or peasant, his character and habits of life—Two classes of land-owners; civilized and uncivilized—A contrast—Transition state of national habits—Absence of a middle class—Evils arising from want of labourers—Fertile country and scanty population—Superabundance of animals valueless to the owners—Inconveniences of travelling—Cleanliness impossible—Dirty habits of the people—Good teeth indispensable—Inconvenience of a late breakfast—Fuel an expensive luxury—System of police—The Bizcacha, and its habits—Owls and ostriches—Habits of the ostrich—Venomous spiders and toads—The Becho Colorado ..... page 154

CHAPTER VIII.

Distant view of Buenos Ayres—Landing at the port—The Muralla, or sea-wall—Aspect of the city—Plaza de la Victoria—Churches and mansions—Arrangement and furniture of houses—Market and prices of edibles—Buenos Ayres an expensive place to live in—The Alaméda, or promenade—Bullock-carts and their drivers—Hickman's public pleasure-grounds—Residence of General Rosas—The Retiro and Protestant cemetery—Striking panoramic view—The Recoleta church, convent, and cemetery—Funeral rites and burials of the poor—Bathing by lamplight 167

CHAPTER IX.

Climate and soil of Buenos Ayres—Terrific storms—The "Pampero"—Winter comfortless for want of warm dwellings—Inundations of plains and neglect of roads—Meteorological table—Showers of ice—Invigorating effect of winter—Autumn and spring delightful—Gradual change in the temperature of the seasons—Miasma and fevers unknown, but contagious diseases

prevalent—The medical profession, its government and members—Anointing with grease a universal practice—Races composing the inhabitants of Buenos Ayres, and other provinces—Numbers of the population of the Argentine Provinces—British emigrants ..... page 181

CHAPTER X.

The Argentine Provinces deficient in water—The four great rivers—Causes of the want of water—Small proportion of wet days in the year—Canals impossible—Surface water only available—Course of the principal rivers favourable for commercial intercommunication—The Rio de la Plata, the Paraguay, the Parana—Importance of great rivers—Extent of inland navigation—Mode of communication between Buenos Ayres and Salta—The two high roads through the Provinces—Bullock-carts the only means of carriage for merchandize—Duration of long journeys—Numbers of cattle and drivers employed in a troop—Difficulties of the route—Food and habits of the drivers—Expenses of carriage—Water communication wholly disregarded 197

CHAPTER XI.

Saladeros, or cattle-steaming establishments—Mode of killing the beasts, curing the flesh, salting and drying hides, and extracting tallow from the carcass—Cost of establishing a saladero—Price and purchase of cattle—Loss attending the driving of cattle to the city—Barracas or warehouses of Buenos Ayres, and brokerage of the barracero—Monetary matters—Bank of Buenos Ayres drained of its specie by Government—The Casada Moneda and its operations—The Savings Bank under official management—Fluctuating value of the paper currency of Buenos Ayres—Table of exchange—Mercantile operations based on barter—Working of the system—Currency of the other provinces—Circulating medium of Monte Video—Influence of British merchants—Prosperity of British settlers—Letters from Rev. Dr. W. Brown and Rev. A. D. Fahy, on the prospects of immigrants 211

CHAPTER XII.

Religious establishments of the Roman Catholics—A state church beggared by the temporal power—Government the head of the Church in South America—Parish priests paid by the State, and by fees and gifts—Friars and nuns—Established religion of the country—Decay of the Jesuit College—Low but improving state of education—Schools in Buenos Ayres kept by foreigners on sufferance—Cathedral of Buenos Ayres—Holy Week as celebrated by the ecclesiastics—Public procession of images of Christ, the Virgin, &c., on Monday—Preparations on the following days for Holy Thursday—Exhibition of images of Christ, the Virgin, and saints, in the streets—Public pulpits for the laity—Procession on Friday night by lamp-light—Striking scene on Saturday at noon to commemorate the Ascension—Burning of Judas Iscariot in effigy—Indulgences offered for attending processions—Mendicant monks—Polite behaviour and good humour of the people—Costly preparations of the ladies for costumes to wear on Holy Thursday—High mass at the cathedral—Display before the altar—The ladies and their dresses—Contrast of South American and English beauty—Procession of the bishop and clergy ..... page 233

CHAPTER XIII.

REMARKS ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS TO THE HEATHEN.

Characteristics of savages—Aboriginal races becoming extinct—Probable effect of slave emancipation—The Jesuits in Paraguay—Labours of Elliott, Brainerd, and other missionaries in North America—Antagonism of strong and weak races—Ultimate extinction of the heathen—Effect of Christian missions—Moffatt, the missionary in Africa—Nature of religious influence—Spiritual destitution of emigrants—Their value as aids to missionaries 253

CHAPTER XIV.

On breeding sheep in Buenos Ayres, and on the management of an estancia, or cattle-farm 272

ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. I.

Preparing to Mount	. . .	Frontispiece.
Map of the Principal Rivers	. .	to face page 1
Hunting a Wild Cow	. . .	„ 137
Waggoners preparing Supper	. . .	„ 209

ERRATUM.

Page 141, line 6 from the top, *for* "commemoration of a victory," *read* "commemoration of their independence."

Map of the
PRINCIPAL RIVERS
OF THE
ARGENTINE PROVINCES

TWO THOUSAND MILES' RIDE

THROUGH

THE ARGENTINE PROVINCES.

CHAPTER I.

Departure from Buenos Ayres—Equestrian traveller's equipments—Church and village of Quilmes—Mr. Clark's farm—Irish labourers—Potato crop and Spanish flies—English hospitality—Value of land, and wages of labourers—Morning scene on the Pampas—Troop of wild horses—Beauty of the verdure—Mounted shepherdess—Horned plovers—Estancia of Mr. Bell—The lazo and the bolas—Horse-breaking—Folding sheep—Ride across the plains—Wild horse of the desert—A pulperia—Patriarchal scene—Price of land—Currency—Value of horse-flesh—Instinct of horses—Manadas—Mode of breeding mules—Native population—Mode of catching partridges—Lazoing a bullock—Colt-breaking—Modes of travelling—Tropilla of horses—Patriarchal family—Scene on the plain—Selecting a tropilla and starting the cavalcade.

It was a bright and beautiful morning in spring when I started from Buenos Ayres on my first equestrian tour through the Argentine Provinces, ac-

companied by my friend and guide Don José. The preparations for our journey had occupied a few days; and as they are characteristic of the usual mode of travelling in this country, it may be desirable to describe them.

Horses in great plenty were to be had, but it was not every one that would suit a rider accustomed only to the well-trained and docile steeds of Europe; at last I purchased two, which, though just arrived from the country, the owner assured me would eat corn—a proof that they have been for some time domesticated. I saw them tried with the bridle, and finding them sufficiently tame for my purpose, I finally bought them (after a long palaver) for a sum equal to about one pound sixteen shillings sterling each. They were well-formed young animals, and at home would be considered very suitable for ladies.

The saddlery and other necessary equipments for making the journey, being all considered indispensable, deserve enumeration. The bridle reins are of plaited raw hide, very strong, and the bits are of English manufacture, but of a Spanish pattern. My saddle consisted of the following items—first a large sheepskin placed on the horse, then a woollen rug neatly folded, which serves the rider for a blanket; on this was laid a covering of untanned dry hide for the purpose of keeping off the rain; next came a woollen quilt made for such purposes in Yorkshire, with long tassels hanging from the corners: this was carefully

folded, and on it was laid a piece of leather, sufficiently large to protect the whole from damp or rain, its ends and sides were neatly stamped with an ornamental border: these coverings answer to the English saddle cloth. Then came what may be termed the saddle-tree, from which the stirrups are suspended, and made of strong leather and wood, forming the basis of a flat seat, although curved a little to suit the back of the horse. The entire of this furniture was secured by a large girth of raw hide, twelve or fourteen inches wide. The saddle is covered, for the sake of ease and comfort, also to serve for a pillow at night, with a sheep-skin, having the wool on, of a brilliant purple dye; upon this is placed a flat covering, somewhat similar to the fringed woollen mats laid at drawing-room doors in England, and over that a piece of thin soft leather, forming the seat of the rider; the whole is again secured to the horse by an ornamental leather girth. This paraphernalia, in addition to the weight of the rider, forms a very heavy burden even for a strong animal, during a long journey at full speed.

The horse of Don José, my companion, was furnished in a similar manner; having in addition, however, a large saddle bag of canvass, containing our small wardrobe, with a few other necessaries and comforts. The saddling of our horses, and the adjusting of our equipments, occupied more than

an hour; when, having received the farewell wishes of our friends, we mounted, and commenced a journey of eight hundred miles, southward through the Pampas, which must be performed in the saddle.

After a ride of about a league, we crossed the Baracca bridge, and entered upon the open plain, where there was no indication whatever of the proximity of a large city. The houses were, for the most part, either recent erections of wood, belonging to Basque immigrants, or built of timber, cane-reeds, and mud plaster; there were a few good brick houses, but the whole scene had more the appearance of an entrance to some boundless plain, than a place within one hour's ride of the capital of a large republic; and the country, as we passed along, was covered with cattle, sheep, and horses.

At the end of three or four leagues, we approached the undulating grounds around Quilmes, near which place the English troops landed in that fatal expedition under the unfortunate General Whitelock. Here the road led us through plantations of peach-trees, willows, and poplars, where we stopped for the day at the house of Mr. Clark, a British subject.

The peach-trees are used for firewood, and are allowed to grow three years from the time of being planted; they are then cut down and sold; and after growing for three years more, are again pollarded; and so on, while the root and stem

retain vitality. This class of investment is expected to pay twenty-five per cent. interest; but such a mode of supplying the town with fuel appears quite too artificial to continue long. Some of the islands in the river Parana are covered with timber, which may be had for the labour of cutting it down; and whenever there shall be a foreign population sufficient to employ boats in this branch of industry, planting timber for fuel will probably be abandoned.

Quilmes has a large brick-built church, with a cemetery attached; this was once enclosed with a wall, which is now quite destroyed; and the cattle entering in search of grass, deface and destroy the tombs. The village consists of one very fine house, and perhaps a dozen of ordinary character; around, in little detached plots of ground, are the usual ranchos, or huts, formed of cane-reeds and mud, which at a distance appear to be smothered in tall rank weeds.

Quilmes was formerly the head-quarters of a tribe of Indians, from whom it takes its name, and who were brought here from the interior with a view to their domestication; they, however, gradually disappeared, and about the year 1820 their lands were given to certain parties, provided they erected houses and made improvements. The history of this tribe of Indians possesses some interest, as it seems to illustrate one of the modes by

which the feebler and less civilized races of mankind are subdued by the stronger. The home of the Quilmes Indians was in the province of Catamarca; where for generations they fought against the encroaching influence of the Spaniards; but finally being reduced to two hundred families, they capitulated, and were removed here for their comfort and civilization. In this purifying process, however, the tribe has become extinct.

This place, not being on a main road, can never be of importance; yet, instead of being overrun with weeds, and otherwise neglected, it might be laid out in small farms, gardens, or vineyards, and thus afford a happy home to many industrious families. At present it is a scene of wretched poverty and desolation, caused by the male portion of the inhabitants being obliged to join the army.

I entered the house of Mr. Clark with feelings allied to those of home: everything had the appearance of English comfort and English industry. I walked through the garden and grounds, which were in beautiful order, and stocked with a profusion of vegetables; neat strong fences, and good paling, enclosed rich paddocks; some Scotch ploughs and harrows had just turned up the finest land I ever saw—a rich black loam, fit to produce anything; the yards were alive with domestic fowls and herds of swine; large ricks of hay stood in an adjoining field; while healthy, happy Irish women

were busied with milk vessels. At this convenient distance from the city, every thing may be turned into money; and Mr. Clark is one of the few men who know how to make the most of everything. Beef, mutton, pigs, fowls, fruit, vegetables, butter, eggs, grass, hay, firewood, all find a ready sale; and, with the exception of butchers' meat, at prices far beyond those of London or Paris. The greatest drawback is the road, which in winter becomes almost impassable.

Close to the farmyard is a *fabrica* for boiling-down (or rather steaming) cattle; the vats are of wrought iron, made in England, and large enough to contain a hundred oxen. The people in Mr. Clark's employment are chiefly Irish, who are industrious, and save nearly all their wages; the number of persons employed may be guessed from the fact that, for the maintenance of his household, Mr. Clark usually kills an ox every third day, besides sheep.

I saw a very fine field of potatoes; although, generally speaking, they are neither so good nor so abundant as in England: there are, however, two crops in the year. The first crop, planted in September, and gathered in January, is exposed to the destructive influence of the Spanish fly, should there be an early summer. These insects are gathered, and sold to the druggists in town; they are so numerous during some seasons that, within a few days after making their first appearance, they literally eat up

the entire root, leaving only a bare withered stem in their track. The second crop of potatoes is planted about February, but should a lingering summer continue to give vitality to the flies, they are sure to destroy the young shoots as fast as they break the ground. The best potato seed is obtained from the captains of ships; it is, however, a very uncertain crop, owing chiefly to the want of sufficient moisture. Of late years the price has ruled from one penny up to threepence per pound. Every other sort of English vegetables will come to perfection here; and in addition to these, pumpkins and melons might form a large portion of the food of the people: the two latter are abundant and cheap.

Mr. Clark invited us to partake of a most excellent dinner of roast beef, fowls, plum pudding, potatoes, and white bread, served up beautifully clean, and well cooked; and being pressed to stay in the evening, we fettered our horses, and turned them out for the night to graze.

Unenclosed land here is worth from about thirty to forty shillings per English acre, for the fee simple; which is the usual value for all land at this distance from the city: that is, five leagues. The price of land in the wilds of Australia is, I believe, twenty shillings per acre, while here, in a delightful country, not half the distance from England, and within fifteen miles of a city containing sixty thou-

sand inhabitants, land may be obtained at forty shillings per acre.

In any attempt at agriculture, the difficulty of making a fence to keep out the cattle, is at once felt; the expense of ditching being considerable. Fencing is paid by the perch. Labourers employed at farm work and ditching usually earn three pounds per month, with their board. Almost all this work is in the hands of the Scotch and Irish.

The bright sunlight piercing through the crevices of our shutters tempted us to turn out of bed at an early hour, and enjoy the pastoral beauty of the scene. On every side extended a seemingly boundless plain, now bright with fresh spring verdure, and covered with myriads of cattle, horses, and sheep; a large flock of the latter belonged to our host. We were astonished at the quantity of mushrooms which covered the ground; in a few minutes we filled a handkerchief full, and bringing them in, had them cooked and served up with our beefsteaks at breakfast, to which they formed a relishing addition.

While engaged in collecting the mushrooms, I was startled by a muffled sound, accompanied by a vibration: the earth appeared to tremble under our feet. On looking up, I perceived the cause: an immense herd of wild horses—to my unaccustomed eyes they numbered at least a thousand—were galloping across the plain. Upon inquiry, I found

that the grass in the more remote country was very bad, owing to the want of rain, while around Quilmes it was still abundant; and these horses had consequently strayed away from their own dried-up pastures. They had gradually increased here to such an extent as to become a serious inconvenience; not so much on account of the grass which they eat, as the injury done to the fences. In order to get rid of them, they were all collected into a *corral*, or enclosure formed of stakes, and half a dozen men, well mounted, were sent to drive them back into the country for a distance of five or six leagues; where they were again at liberty to roam about and provide for themselves.

After a very substantial breakfast, we took leave of our worthy host, and pursued our journey; our road lying through Pampas of the finest pasture. At this season the grass was beginning to display its rapid growth and rich verdure; in some places, as far as the eye could reach, we beheld a beautiful velvet-like carpet of a deep green hue, thickly sprinkled with the golden-coloured spring flowers, and close around us, the plain was thickly spotted with white mushrooms. There were no timber trees, except one or two near a house; but dwellings were few, as the population is very scanty.

Close to a small stream we passed a large flock of sheep, which showed they had been tended with much care; their white fleeces in strong contrast

with the deep green grass. A mounted shepherdess was engaged in driving in some stray lambs; and as I was not near enough to judge of her features, my imagination at once clothed her with Arcadian beauty and loveliness; her care for the lambs giving me a favourable opinion of her industry and kindness, I regarded her for some time with more than common interest. Birds of prey were hovering around her, and on the bank of the stream were some Turkey buzzards ready to pounce on a stray lamb.

We continued our journey until stopped by a deep but narrow rivulet; in order to discover the place that was fordable, we sought for the track of other equestrians, and having found some recent hoof-prints, we crossed over without any inconvenience. Thus far we knew our course, but here we had to inquire our way at a rancho, or hut; the owner of which very courteously pointed to a small plantation on a rising ground, about half a league distant, which we were to reach, and then bear away to the left. Having passed this waymark, I felt fatigued, and dismounted to take rest and refreshment. The mushrooms all around looked so fresh and tempting, that we at once kindled a fire, and roasted a few in the wood ashes; with these, and the accompaniment of a biscuit, we enjoyed a most grateful repast.

Wild birds in great variety were all around us—

some were birds of prey, chiefly of the hawk species; a laguna, or lake, that lay at our feet, was literally covered with wild ducks; while the horned plovers, attracted by the smoke, hovered above our heads, poised on their wings, seeming to scrutinize us and our proceedings. The habits of this bird, both on foot and on the wing, are precisely the same as the green plover at home; they derive their name from a curved horny substance, about three quarters of an inch long, projecting from the joint of the wing. I thought the beauty of the scene would be complete could we have listened to the music of the groves; but here no leafy coverts afford shelter to the songsters of nature.

Having enjoyed our simple repast, and given our steeds and ourselves rest, we again rode on, and in about an hour arrived at the *estancia*, or cattle-farm, of Mr. Bell, a Scotch gentleman, whose representative, in his absence, gave us a hearty welcome. The first duty after our arrival, was to see the horses carefully fettered, yoked together by the neck, and turned out to graze. In our sitting-room, I was glad to observe, among other books, a Bible, the usual companion to a Scotch family. Having partaken of refreshment for both mind and body, I retired to sleep, and to dream of home.

The refreshing sleep I enjoyed during the early part of the night, was afterwards disturbed by sounds that were somewhat strange to me; and towards

morning I was aroused sufficiently to ascertain that my chamber window overlooked a corral filled with sheep and lambs; the bleating of these, together with the lowing of cattle, the barking of dogs, and the noise of domestic and wild fowls, made a discord which effectually banished sleep: but I soon became familiar with such sounds.

The morning being foggy, we had a long search for our horses; as Don José, who went in search of them, having neglected to take the bearings of the house with his compass before starting, lost his way in the fog; and when they were found, we discovered that their head stalls had been stolen: we congratulated ourselves that the thief had left us the animals.

On this estancia I had an opportunity of seeing the mode of catching cattle, horses, and other animals. The lazo is chiefly used, and is a most important and necessary implement in the country; that used for a corral is usually about twelve yards in length, but, for the open plain, one of about twenty yards is required. It is of one entire piece, cut from raw hide; an iron ring is secured to one end, by which means a running noose is formed; and when it is used by a horseman, he secures one end firmly to his saddle, coiling up the other end in his hand, with the noose ready formed: before throwing it, he swings it round his head to give it momentum, while he watches the favourable moment

to throw it over the head of his victim. The natives are extremely expert in using the lazo; it is their earliest toy in childhood; and to lazo cats, dogs, and sheep, is the delight of children.

Another mode of catching animals is with the bolas. Three round stones, each about the size of an egg, are selected and covered with hide; one is fastened to either end of a strip of the same material, about ten feet long; the third stone ball is secured to a strip five feet long, which is attached to the middle of the longer strip: thus the bolas consists of three stout thongs, each five feet from the centre, with a ball at the end of each. When flung at an animal's hind legs, the bolas twines round them, and, as he increases his speed, and endeavours to free himself, it becomes so entangled as to arrest his course. It may be thrown fifty to sixty yards with some certainty; and an equestrian, from the fleetness of his horse aiding the force of his arm, will throw it eighty or ninety yards.

After breakfast, we proceeded to view the estancia, which is three leagues in length, by about one league in width, and chiefly designed for sheep, although there are some cattle. A troop of untamed horses were driven into the corral, and we had an opportunity of seeing the mode of taming a wild horse for the saddle. The horse-breaker, a Frenchman, a very fine young fellow, entered the corral with his lazo, and selecting the horse best

suited for his purpose, threw the noose over the animal with unerring precision, and brought it to the ground; he then put on the bridle, which is merely a strip of hide securely fastened to the under jaw, and sustained by a head stall of the same material. The horse was then allowed to get on his feet, when he was saddled, and the rider at once mounted. At first the animal stood still, trembling with excitement, but, upon feeling the spurs, he darted off across the plain with lightning-speed, and was quickly out of sight; he soon came back, however, covered with sweat and foam, and apparently much subdued; this is the first step in horse-breaking.

Another spirited young animal was lazoed, and saddled in the same manner, and then mounted by an Englishman, who was a runaway sailor, about twenty-two years old, and certainly one of the most athletic and manly fellows I ever saw. The moment he leaped into the saddle, the horse plunged most violently, but forward he would not go, and seemed determined to unseat his rider; for a long time he continued to rear and plunge, but so skilfully did the rider maintain his seat, that horse and man seemed to realize the idea of the fabled centaur; at length the horse made a fearful plunge, and came down on his side. The rider, who was unhurt, again mounted, when the animal set off in a furious gallop, varied with occasional spasmodic leaps and plunges; but the horse was finally sub-

dued. After this, we were amused by the throwing of the bolas. As the troop escaped from the corral, it was thrown at a fine black colt; the moment it reached his legs, he increased his speed, kicking and jumping most violently; but soon it became so thoroughly entangled around his legs, that he fell on his side, and we hastened to relieve him.

Upon this estancia there is a small apparatus for steaming sheep; some of the sheds and out-buildings being covered with zinc. Three or four year old wethers are those usually selected for that purpose, as they are then considered in their prime. In our rides we fell in with several Irish settlers, all obtaining high wages; some were employed in burning bricks, which cost about twenty shillings per thousand.

In the evening we assisted in the truly pastoral employment of the estancia, and rode out to drive home the sheep at sunset. The shepherds, mounted on small and tame horses, each carried a long thonged whip, with which they raised the weak lambs from the ground without dismounting. The strong lambs were playfully skipping, but some of the very young and feeble had to be carried. The dogs obediently did their duty, with the intelligence for which shepherds' dogs in Britain are remarkable; and on reaching the corral the flock was folded for the night. In all probability several young lambs

were left behind us, although we were very careful; and if so, they would perish before morning.

The next morning was cold, cloudy, and misty; but we mounted our horses, and, inquiring the way, were desired to look across the plain towards a small plantation, and there sweep the horizon until our eyes rested upon a house standing by the side of a tree: this house is the first point we had to reach; thence we were to turn off to the right, and join what is called the main road, but which merely consists of the beaten tracks of travellers crossing grassy plains. Just then, as they always are at this season of the year, they were good, but in winter they are very bad. The country was here much more undulating than I was led to expect; and the appearance of cattle ascending from the level pastures to the top of the rising grounds, was very picturesque.

As we journeyed along, we passed close to a burrow of ferrets, one of which, probably the female, ran towards us grinning and chattering fiercely; as we halted, two more of smaller size joined in the attack; but the moment they reached us, the apparent mother seized one of them by the back of the neck, and dragged it into the hole; she then returned for the other, and finally took refuge herself. I dismounted, and lay quietly for a long time on the grass, hoping to shoot and examine one, but was disappointed; for although they frequently came to the mouth of the hole to reconnoitre, I

could not cover one with my pistol. While watching for the ferrets, a numerous flock of small wild birds, with plumage very similar to our goldfinch, passed over our heads and alighted on a pool of water at a little distance, where they enjoyed a bath. As we proceeded, we observed a beautiful white stallion careering along some rising grounds, and driving into his herd one or two mares who had been coquetting with his rivals; his flowing mane and long tail, streaming on the wind as he galloped at full speed, showed off his noble form, proportions, and action, and seemed to realize the idea of a fiery Pegasus.

We stopped for refreshments at a pulperia, which is a combination of a public-house and general shop for the country people. The end of the house ranged with the road, and had a square opening, well secured with bars of wood during the day and closed with a shutter at night, through which the owner handed to his customers whatever they required; travellers being protected from the weather by a verandah. Such is the general character of the pulperias throughout the plains. This had once been a pretty spot, but the vines were neglected, and the place altogether had a desolate appearance.

After a delightful ride of a few leagues, we reached the estancia of Mr. Taylor. It contains a league and a half of land, is well watered, and must be a very valuable property; the stock embracing

every variety of domestic animals—horses, cattle, sheep, mules, and asses. The house is brick-built, one story high, with a flat roof, and, standing in a garden stocked with fruit-trees and vegetables, presents a most inviting and agreeable appearance : a little oasis of comfort and cultivation in a desert of uncultivated wildness.

When we arrived, the flocks were all coming into the fold, and we sat down on the steps of the door to contemplate the scene, which carried the mind back to the pastoral habits of the patriarchal age as recorded in the Old Testament. The flocks and herds of our host had become so large that, like Abraham and Lot, he must divide them ; for if he wishes to visit some of his herds, he has to go an immense distance, and on reaching the place, finds perhaps that, like the asses Saul went in search of, they have gone astray. A life of this description so completely resembles in habits, feelings, and desires, the patriarchal times, that nothing more is wanting to realize those primitive scenes and associations than the use of tents ; for if the dwellers in these plains sojourned in tabernacles, then the Old Testament account of the manners of early times would be descriptive of life on these plains at the present moment. I remember when a boy being extremely sceptical in reading the story of Jacob sleeping in the open air at night, but here the habit of sleeping out of doors is general during summer. Children

when reading the Scriptures should have explained to them the nature of an eastern climate, and the primitive habits of the people.

Land in this neighbourhood sells at sixty thousand paper dollars for a square league; but it is difficult to attach an accurate sterling value to this sum, on account of the continued fluctuations in the value of this paper currency: about two years since, the exchange was fourpence, now it does not exceed twopence three-farthings; supposing, however, the paper dollar at the present time to be worth fourpence, then a square league of land, equal to about six thousand English acres, would cost one thousand pounds sterling, or three-and-fourpence per acre; and this for a splendid sheep-walk within fifteen leagues of the city of Buenos Ayres. It is not a little surprising that the Buenos Ayreans, in their monetary dealings, never seem to recognize the alterations in value of their currency; for whether the exchange value be at threepence or at sixpence, the price of the league of land would still be sixty thousand dollars: so that those purchasers who buy land when the exchange is low, may be sure of making a valuable investment, as the exchange will gradually advance.

Being now about to spend a few weeks amongst plains covered with cattle, sheep, and horses, I had taken some pains to ascertain their value and habits. No animal varies so much in price as the

horse. A troop of wild mares, colts, and fillies of all ages, good and bad together, are worth, one with another, ten dollars, or three shillings sterling, each; picked, unbroken colts, fetch fifty dollars, or fifteen shillings, each; but purchased in lots of an hundred and upwards, they are sold for thirty dollars, or nine shillings, each. Colts broken in, vary in price from one hundred and fifty to five hundred dollars each; but here, as in England, there is no limit to the price paid for a docile, handsome, and serviceable horse.

A very general opinion prevails in Europe that these plains, especially to the south, are covered with wild horses. This is a great mistake; for, strictly speaking, there are none literally wild in the country, since all of right belong to some owner, and either have, or ought to have, his mark upon them. There can be no doubt they would very soon become wild, were they neglected; but with a view of bringing them into subjection, it is customary, two or three times a week, to drive them to some particular spot on the estancia, which is called the rodeo. In spring, those proprietors who have sufficient men, and are careful of their stock, collect them every morning; and although the horses are treated with cruel and unnecessary severity in the process of taming, they are as necessary to the happiness and existence of a gaucho as the very clothes he wears, and form a favourite subject of conversation.

The habits of the horse are very remarkable, and

exhibit extraordinary instinct. They are formed into manadas (companies, families, or flocks), each containing from fifty to one hundred animals, under the care of one stallion; and upon his instinctive affection, courage, and watchfulness, the safety of the manadas entirely depends. The mares are all known to him, and if any of them wander, he follows and drives them home; if they are slow to return, he will bite them. The stallion not only keeps all his own family together, but will sometimes steal the mares from his neighbouring rivals. When an act of abduction is detected by the stallion to whom the coquette belongs, a battle royal ensues, the victor of course carrying off the captive. Such is the extraordinary instinct and sympathy of horses, that were ten thousand of them driven together, when they were driven off, each stallion would be followed by all his own mares, colts, and fillies.

When the owner of an estancia wishes to form a manada, he sends round in the spring of the year to his neighbours, and collects all the mares having his mark, which may have wandered during the year; and when they are collected together, each animal has a piece of her hoof cut off, sufficiently large to cause lameness, and prevent her from wandering. They are then, together with a stallion, driven by themselves, and taken care of for a few days, or until their affianced spouse has formed the acquaintance of his seraglio; but if he should ap-

pear inclined to ramble and seek for stolen pleasures, his feet are fettered, and in this way, before spring departs, the whole family are moulded into affectionate companionship. On the estancia of my host there are seventeen manadas; and one of his neighbours possesses at least two thousand horses, old and young. The rate of increase is about thirty-three per cent. per annum; the cause of this extraordinary increase is that the Government of the province will not allow them to be killed: horses being so very important to the State in raising its armies, which chiefly consist of cavalry; only a few infantry being required in cantonments.

It is difficult to locate a manada, when removed from their native pastures to a new tract, and it is necessary to keep a man for some time continually riding round them to prevent the animals starting home at a full gallop: horses have been known to reach their native plains a hundred leagues distant, after an absence of two or three years.

The breeding of mules is very much attended to in this district; they are kept in large numbers by Mr. Taylor, to meet the demand for them from Rio Janeiro, the West Indies, or the Mauritius. They are worth one hundred paper dollars each, in troops good and bad; but when put on board at Ensanada or at Buenos Ayres, to the entire satisfaction of the supercargo, they fetch a doubloon. In order to breed mules, as soon as a mare foals, the foal is

killed, and its skin immediately spread over a young male ass of about the same age; the hot blood of the slain foal is then sprinkled upon the head and limbs of the ass, and the mare being thus deceived, rears the adopted one, which will never afterwards follow his own species.

The population is very thin, and the natives are generally unwilling to occupy themselves in any way except in the ordinary duties of an estancia. They live in ranchos or huts, without the smallest spot of ground either to plant a flower or raise a vegetable. The land, though very fertile, is never tilled by them, their food being exclusively beef and mutton; they have neither bread, milk, nor vegetables, and seldom eat salt. They usually take maté* early in the morning; indeed they are drinking it throughout the entire day. They breakfast on beef or mutton at eleven o'clock, and make a supper or dinner of the same about an hour after sunset.

The resources of the country are altogether neglected for want of an industrious population; for instance, the laundry for this house is sent to a distance of six leagues every week. Wages appear low, but they are really high; for every one disposed to be industrious saves money so very rapidly, that he soon begins in some way or other for himself; and those from amongst whom

* Maté is an infusion of yerba: for which plant Paraguay is celebrated.

labourers can be obtained are either the useless, or newly-arrived emigrants who know very little.

Shepherds and herdsmen receive one hundred to one hundred and fifty dollars per month, together with six pounds of yerba and some salt; and beef and mutton without stint. They live in a rancho; and if they have wives or children to assist in keeping the sheep, they may themselves exercise the privilege of occasionally going out on hire, and when so employed will earn twenty dollars per day additional. When a man is hired either to part cattle, or to mark them, he receives from twenty to twenty-five dollars per day; but then he is expected to bring his own horses, and for such work they will require ten or twelve. The labour is often very severe indeed, and it is not surprising that indolence should follow such toil, particularly in so hot a climate. Horses are soon exhausted, and grass alone does not invigorate them for long-continued effort.

I met with a Basque immigrant, whose history shows what industry will accomplish. He arrived about two years back, and when he had gained a little knowledge of the habits of the people, he travelled through the country with a cart, buying sheep-skins and horse-hair, which he sold in Buenos Ayres, and at once began to save four or five pounds monthly. He has now a flock of sheep in partnership with an Englishman, and is also ditching a piece of land to make a garden; out of which, by

selling the fruit and vegetables, he will obtain a good income: there can be no doubt but that very soon he will be comparatively rich.

Having arranged to turn out early this morning to see the cattle driven to the rodeo, we rose and were in the saddle betimes; the sun was rapidly climbing the heavens, predicting a delightful day, and as we proceeded to meet the herdsmen, wild ducks took to wing in every direction. Partridges were also abundant; indeed, they are so very plentiful and tame that boys occasionally amuse themselves by catching them with a noose of horse-hair on the end of a cane-reed. The urchins ride round the birds in a circle, which gradually becomes less and less, until sufficiently close to reach the prey; the birds being bewildered by the continued circular motion, on which they steadily fix their gaze.

The cattle having reached the rodeo, an ox had to be selected for the household, and I very naturally wondered how he was to be caught; as we were on a boundless plain, and for aught I knew the animal might lead us a chase as far as Patagonia, there being no obstacle to hinder him. Mr. Taylor rode in amongst the herd, and after some minutes, fixed his choice on a prime young bullock; but no sooner did the animal find that he was an object of attention, and that an attempt was made to separate him from the herd, than he tossed up his head and appeared determined to show

sport. The horsemen, endeavouring to surround him, approached closer and closer, but in doing so, the whole herd became alarmed and in a ferment; and the animal, being closely pressed, escaped, bounding away across the plains. Three horsemen gave chase; a youth on a brown colt took the lead, and appeared to gain on the beast. I galloped off at a right angle to get a good view, when presently the youth gathered up the lazo, and we watched its gyrations as steadily and gracefully he swung it round his head in widening circles. Both the pursued and the pursuer were soon at the top of their speed, as if struggling for life; the horseman gained a little; the fatal noose was thrown, but just as it appeared to reach the bullock's horns, the beast suddenly wheeled round and charged me furiously. I rode off as rapidly as possible, without so much as looking behind me, and was almost out of sight of my companions, before I had the courage to draw bridle; while the bullock, as if despising my cowardice, turned and finally joined the herd.

Again the horsemen approached, and again, after breaking cover, the beast took to the plains, four horsemen giving chase. Don Pepe, who now took the lead, mounted on a swift and powerful grey colt, is a dexterous hand at the lazo, and appeared to gain on the animal. As he approached the game, he began to give momentum to the lazo by gently swinging it around his head, when the ox, as if

instinctively apprehending danger, gave a slight curve; the horse, faithful to his charge, followed in the course. Every moment the chase became thrilling with excitement, until finally the noose was thrown with unerring precision, and reached the horns of the animal; instantly the horse halted and prepared for the shock. The ox, now mad with terror, and at the full stretch of his speed, reached the end of the coil, and was thrown on the ground, literally rolling over and over; but with fearful bellowings he gained his feet in a moment, tossing up his head and plunging most violently in his endeavours to get loose. Another lazo was then thrown over his horns, and thus held from opposite sides he allowed himself to be drawn for a long distance, bellowing and plunging all the way, until he reached a convenient place, where he was despatched.

After breakfast we rode over the estancia, and on our return spent two or three hours in looking on at an attempt to break in a wild colt. In this instance the attempt was a failure: the animal plunged most furiously for a long time, and would not move forward an inch; at length, either from exhaustion or from instinct, he lay down, nor was it possible to make him again stand up; at last, he was literally dragged along the grass by two lazos and secured to a post.

Previous to resuming our ride I had a long consultation with our hospitable friend, Mr. Taylor,

as to the best mode of proceeding; for whether the journey proved agreeable and successful, or turned out a vexatious failure, depended on present arrangements. The point to be decided was, should we proceed further with our own horses, or send them back to town, and buy fresh ones here, sufficiently strong and numerous to carry us through. Our horses were capable of taking us a long distance still, and we learned that further on in the country they are cheaper.

Two modes of travelling in this country present themselves; one to keep to the post roads, where horses and guides may be obtained at each post-house; the other to purchase a tropilla, or little troop of horses, and choose our own route: in the latter case each traveller should have at least four horses, for a long journey.

Every tropilla has a mare with a bell suspended from her neck, and the horses, if well-trained, will never leave her side. Only as many as are needed for the travellers are saddled at starting; the remainder being driven along the way, ready to supply a change when needful. On the docility of the horses in following the mare, depends the money value and the real utility of the troop; if they are not well trained, they run wild and are lost, or it requires an additional number of men to drive and keep them together. Another very important precaution is to obtain colts that are thoroughly broken, and sufficiently quiet for ordinary riders. The natives are

so used to horses, that they can ride anything with four legs, and in a troop of horses which they would swear were as tame as lambs, perhaps not one could be found quiet enough to be mounted, except by an expert equestrian.

The object of my journey being to obtain information as to the amount of population, the manners and habits of the people, and the sources of industrial wealth, I resolved to buy a tropilla, and thus be free to vary my course, and to visit places in different directions as I might have occasion: having this object in view, I would not leave myself dependent on the post-houses, or be confined to the post roads.

In order to select a tropilla, we rode to the residence of a native about half a league distant, who had one for sale; as we drew near his house, he came out to meet us. This customary mark of attention and hospitality forcibly brings to mind Abraham's going out of his tent to meet the three angels disguised as young men, on the eve of the destruction of the cities of the plain. The man who approached—a very fine looking old man, at least six feet high—begged us to dismount and enter his dwelling; and he being a neighbour of Mr. Taylor, and on friendly terms with him, we found ourselves in a moment quite at our ease.

The hut, built of cane-reeds and mud, was not white-washed; the walls were scarcely six feet high,

and the roof was thatched with bulrushes. It contained two rooms, neither of them having a window, so far as I could discover; but the door was well hung upon iron hinges of British manufacture. In the adjoining apartment I discerned the figure of a tall woman standing up combing her hair; it was the movement of her arms that first caught my attention: nothing exhibits the perfection of woman's figure, or betrays any defects, more completely than such an attitude.

As soon as we took our seats, one of the daughters of our host very courteously handed us maté, in a gourd somewhat larger than a goose egg, silver mounted. This infusion is very similar in flavour to strong tea, and is the universal and favourite beverage of the natives: it is drunk through a tube by suction. Though the house was small, the family was large; there being several daughters and daughters-in-law in the house, and three younger sons (the elder being in the army): all were clothed in articles of British manufacture. The master of this household was a fair specimen of his class amongst the natives: although the erection of his house and all the furniture it contains cost less than thirty pounds, yet he possessed property of such a nature as to be at all times available, to the extent of at least three thousand pounds sterling.

Standing under the agreeable shade of two ombu-trees near the house, I took a view of the

surrounding scene. Cats, dogs and domestic fowls were basking in the sun's bright rays close to the door; a little boy lay stretched on the grass clipping weeds with sheep-shears. A long hut, built of the same materials as the dwelling-house, formed a cook-house, and residence for the men-servants; at one end was a contrivance shaped like a bee-hive, but double its size, for baking bread; and a well was near at hand.

On the plain behind the house were several tame ostriches; one more joyous than the others was careering in the plenitude and vivacity of his impulsive nature; now starting off for some distance, gradually increasing his speed, until suddenly, as if startled, he altered his course, and ran in another direction; then he pretended to be again frightened, and came with the speed of lightning towards the house. How long he continued giving play to his joyous activity, I cannot tell, but his movements were to me both novel and exciting. As far as the eye could reach, the plain was covered with cattle, sheep, and horses.

The sun's rays were now very strong, and towards the west the landscape seemed to be enlivened with the most beautiful lakes, which appeared studded with little islands, overgrown with plants and flowering shrubs, and some fringed with poplar-trees. Intending to make this beautiful track on my way home, I inquired the way thither,

and found, to my disappointment, that the lakes and wooded islands were all optical illusion: it was the well-known mirage of the desert. Nothing can more strikingly represent the unreal and evanescent delights of life, when viewed in the bright perspective of fancy by the hopeful gaze of happy youth.

The foreground of the picture before me, for an immense distance, was glowing with May-flowers; their golden cups, filled with the dews of night, were being drained by the thirsty sun; the whole scene had an air of eastern life about it, that carried one back in imagination to the earliest ages: the vastness of the solitude, and the primeval simplicity of the landscape, made me feel as though I were amongst the Bedouin Arabs, or close to the abiding place of Isaac and Rebecca.

While contemplating the impressive scene, my companions disturbed my reverie, as they had opened negotiations for the purchase of a tropilla, which was now brought for our inspection. The horses appeared to be of a very superior breed, and their attachment to the mare was very evident: we separated them by a variety of means, but still they all struggled to keep by her side; nor were they satisfied with being near her, for they strove with each other to place themselves in such a position as to have their necks across her back: upon this point there could be no deception. The next ques-

tion was, as to tameness. Both the old man and his son strongly assured me they were all so tame that a child could ride them with perfect safety. For trial we selected one which, from his size, symmetry, and beauty, I chose for myself at the outset of our journey. He was saddled, and as I found him very docile, we did not try any more; intending to take our chance of their tameness, when they were to be mounted. Then came the question as to price. A sum equal to two pounds sixteen shillings each was demanded, nor would the owner abate a single fraction; and as they were very superior and well-trained horses, as a troop, we agreed to his price. The tropilla consists of eight horses and the mare; and there is no doubt but that, at the end of a successful journey, I shall be able to obtain *in the town* the same price that I now pay *here:* although I believe I paid too much, small as the sum seems.

Having now provided horses, my next business was to obtain a person to act as guide, and also to take care of my tropilla. This, however, I found to be a great difficulty; for the male members of almost every family are away in the army, and the few who remain at home are not sufficient to attend to the most necessary duties of life. One man was recommended to us as a good guide, who has five horses; and if he had consented to go with me, I should have had to pay him about seven or eight shillings per day, as remuneration for

himself and his horses; but I could not hope to obtain his services. My good friend Mr. T., perceiving my disappointment, kindly permitted his son to accompany me, to be my companion and adviser; and, with his aid, I made ready to resume my journey under very favourable auspices.

Don Pepe, the young gentleman who now so opportunely joined me, was an uncommonly fine young man; though not yet twenty, he stood nearly six feet high, and had a chest and shoulders not to be surpassed; he was amiable and intelligent too, as well as handsome. The prospect of such an adventurous journey was delightful to him, and he entered upon it with ardour and animation. He visited the late owner of the tropilla, to learn from the son, with whom he is acquainted, the true character of the horses; and I charged him to ascertain with certainty their docility when saddled — that being the only point of which I entertained the least doubt. On returning from his visit, he told us that three were tame, two neither tame nor wild, and one only fit to be a perch for a wild bird—a report more favourable than we expected. Don Pepe, being born and brought up in the country, was a superior equestrian, and, moreover, well skilled in the use of the bolas and the lazo; therefore, with him as our guide, together with three tame and three wild colts, I had not much to fear: I had seen him perform extraordinary feats of horsemanship.

The morning was rather cloudy on which I had arranged to leave Magdelena; all was bustle and excitement, preparatory to our departure. Don José, my old fellow-traveller, and Don Pepe, my new companion, together with all the members of this kind family, were, as well as myself, busily engaged, each in some separate department. My canvass saddle bags were condemned by experienced travellers as totally useless, since a single heavy shower of rain would saturate them; I therefore transferred my wardrobe and other necessaries to a bag of raw hide, which was placed across the back of a horse, and covered over and well secured with a large piece of hide. I also abandoned my large native spurs, the horses being too wild for me to use them; nor did I in future require any others.

Our cavalcade now began to assume a formidable aspect to my inexperienced eye; but it is one so common in the country that the children scarcely thought it any novelty. All being ready for our departure, Don José summoned me to horse. With feelings of thankfulness to my kind host and his family, I bid them all farewell, and joined Don Pepe at the door, where our horses were in waiting; then mounting we proceeded to the corral, where we found a sumpter-horse loaded with all our necessaries, eight spare horses for the saddle—four of which were Don Pepe's—besides the mare: none of them had ever been shod.

The men in charge of the corral were desired to turn loose the troop; when the mare cleared out at a somewhat rapid pace towards her own pastures, followed, of course, by her companions. We put our horses to full speed, yet found it a very difficult and troublesome task to keep the tropilla in the proper direction: unwilling to leave home, they led us many a chase, in every direction but the right one, and when we got them all together, fancying our trouble was over, the mare would perhaps take a sudden turn one way, while the horses of Don Pepe took a sweep in the opposite direction. This labour continued for about three leagues, when we began to proceed in better order. Our starting was very similar to a ship beating out of harbour against a head wind.

CHAPTER II.

Halt and changing horses—Making for the "clouds"—An extempore deer-hunt—Homely hospitality at an estancia—Native mode of roasting and eating meat—Native riding-boots—A fragrant resting-place—A bull tossing the carcass of a cow—Reception by the host and hostess of a British estancia—Hospitality as described in Scripture—Danger of losing sheep by inundation—Native well and modes of drawing water—Chascamus Lake, and lovely scenc—Native huts and women — Dishonesty of the soldiery — Estancia of Mr. Thwaites at Chascamus—The tropilla missing—Prevalence of horse-stealing—A justice of the peace—Perils of free-speaking—Sheep farms.

Our first halt was at an estancia, containing an extent of pasture five leagues square, on which were from fifteen to twenty thousand head of cattle. Here we asked permission to put our horses into the corral, in order to obtain a fresh one for Don Pepe, whose horse appeared tired—he having ridden very hard during the morning; and having also to carry a heavy lazo, bolas, and sundry hide ropes, needful for our journey. Close to the corral was a store, which we visited with the hope of obtaining a

few biscuits, or some bread. Upon entering, we were agreeably surprised to find it belonged to a Scotchman, who insisted upon our going into the house and resting ourselves; he also made us partake of an excellent luncheon. We again mounted, and now turned off the road (such as it was), and entered upon the grassy plains, making a detour from our proper course to give Don Pepe an opportunity of obtaining from an acquaintance some necessary information regarding our journey. For about a league we galloped on most agreeably. I was most fortunate with my horse, which had an easy gait, and was gentle, although very timid; his mouth was so tender that I dared not let him feel the bridle, and I sometimes felt as if mounted on a wild antelope.

The horse of Don José, however, was restive and uneasy, and we halted to give him one with a smoother pace. In performing this necessary part of our daily business we found the priceless value of a well-trained tropilla, since we had only to ride round them slowly a few times, when they became a close group. Don Pepe dismounted, and I held his horse, which was most untameable. He walked slowly up to the tropilla and fettered the mare, and then endeavoured to catch the horse which he wished for. This was an amusing operation; when he went on one side of the mare the whole troop went round to the other side; and then, if he

changed and went back the other way, they also changed their course to avoid him, and went in an opposite direction: it was like the play of children pursuing each other in a circle. We were much pleased to observe that the horses never attempted to leave the mare. Once Don Pepe attempted to steal a march upon them, by going under her belly; but he was instantly perceived, and they all sheered round to the opposite direction. He could at any moment obtain some horse, but his object was to select a particular one; and in this he at length succeeded.

Before we started, and as soon as Don José was mounted, I inquired our way. Don Pepe replied, pointing with his hand,—

"Do you see those cattle?"

"I see nothing else but cattle."

"Well, do you see something dark, like a large herd of cattle?"

"Yes, I see something dark, but I can't distinguish whether they are cows or horses."

"Well, can you see anything in that direction on which to fix your eye?"

"Yes, I see large fleecy clouds."

"Fleecy clouds! oh, you still think you are on the ocean! Very well: ride straight for those 'clouds.'"

"But where am I to go when I reach the 'clouds?'"

"Never mind where you are to go: before you reach them we shall see something else."

Don José now inquired what he should do if the clouds moved; and then, as if in despair, we all agreed to gallop off for the 'clouds' as fast as possible.

We now entered upon plains, where for the first time I saw wild deer and ostriches; and here we enjoyed a glorious chase. We were going at rather a gentle pace, when we came upon a herd of deer; they did not appear to take much notice of us, until we were near enough for them to hear the mare's bell, the sound of which attracted their notice; for they turned their heads, and stood with ears erect, and their bits of tails stiff with expectation. We gave a long tally-ho, which sent off both horses and deer at a killing pace, and being compelled, *nolens volens*, to keep up with them, we seemed as if in full chase of a troop of wild colts. It was most princely sport: Nimrod himself never had a finer chase. The cattle on the estancia cleared out, leaving a broad open space for our coursers; and for a long distance we followed at full speed a quarry composed of colts, deer, and ostriches. Storks, turkey buzzards, and countless flocks of birds, poised on their wings, as if astonished at the unwonted sight. At length the ostriches and deer parted company; and we very gladly saw our tropilla slackening their pace. It reminded me of a superstition amongst the natives: almost every night, at about the same hour, it is said, all the dogs in the country commence a most melancholy howling, as

if they were lamenting the dead; and the natives say that this occurs when some spirit rides past on his nightly rounds, mounted on a wild colt, and driving a troop of horses before him.

After an exciting day—perhaps the most exciting of my life—we reached the estancia where we intended to sleep, and where Don Pepe hoped to obtain some valuable information. The house was shaded by three or four ombu-trees, and the owner politely came out to meet us, asking us to alight and come in for the night. I was agreeably surprised to see two beautiful greyhounds, strong enough to pull down a deer, who playfully responded to my caresses. As is customary, we placed our saddles upon the grass for a few minutes, while we accompanied our host into the house, where we exchanged civilities; and being requested to bring in our saddles, we were shown our quarters for the night.

A piece of beef was quickly roasted, and we were invited to partake of supper. Upon going into the house I took with me the chair from under the tree where I had been sitting, and seated myself at a round table covered with a clean tablecloth, on which was a dish containing the beef, some brown biscuit, a tin vessel of water, with a plate and a fork for each guest, but no knife: we were expected to provide salt for ourselves, and to use our own knives. Being very hungry, we did justice to the repast, which we enjoyed exceedingly, and afterwards we

rose and thanked our host, who made us very welcome.

I was somewhat at a loss how to clean my good dagger-knife, for I was reluctant to sheathe it uncleaned; at last it occurred to me to thrust it into the thatch of the house, and clean it as well as I could that way: which I did. Walking about afterwards to inspect the place, I found, to my great surprise, that the front wall of the house was of stone; having understood that there was no stone whatever on these plains. Wishing to obtain a specimen for the satisfaction of a geological friend, my host very kindly pulled a piece out of the wall for the purpose. The house is one story high, contains only two rooms, and is thatched with bulrushes. In the front is an enclosed space designed for a garden, and having a variety of sweet-smelling shrubs, and flowering plants, with some cabbages and onions growing in it; but it does not show any careful cultivation, and a stork has been luxuriating in it all the evening. Opposite the garden is a peach orchard. At sunset, when the labours of the day were over, the men-servants and others had a game of bowls with the master.

Towards bedtime we were very plentifully supplied with maté before retiring to rest. The room contained one small bedstead, with a mattress (I believe) of wool; and also a catre, a description of bedstead in universal use throughout the country,

very convenient and portable: it is made on the same principle as a folding garden-chair, with a canvass bottom that doubles up. Our host having supplied each guest with a clean sheet and pillow, wished us good-night: our ponchos (the large square cloaks with a hole in the middle to put the head through, peculiar to the country) and our saddles supplied the remainder of our bedding. Our horses continued to give us some anxiety, as we feared they might return home, if we left them on the grass during the night; they were, therefore, put into the corral—only those intended for the saddle to-morrow being let to feed on the grass, and these were hobbled.

At an early hour in the morning Don Pepe very kindly brought me a maté while in bed: it must be an excellent tonic, judging from its unusual bitterness when taken without sugar. Upon rising and going out I was at once struck with the perfect flatness of the country: it was a dead level of vast extent, not the slightest undulation being discernible. As the natives do not breakfast sooner than eleven o'clock, and we were anxious to resume our route, we wished to have some substantial food before we started, and therefore asked our host for some beef; he very hospitably desired us to cut what we wanted, and Don Pepe, who knew best where the tender pieces are, accordingly took his knife and cut off a piece to roast. Such is the

custom of the country in these cases; the traveller is desired to take what he chooses, as there is always abundance of meat hanging up in some open place.

Following Don Pepe into the cookhouse, we found our host and two or three others sitting round the fire. The fireplace was on the ground in the centre of the room, and consisted of a row of bricks on edge, enclosing about a yard square, the fire being in the centre; over it, supported on an iron frame, a kettle was boiling. We took our seats around it on logs of wood about six or eight inches high. Maté was then handed round by a boy. There being no chimney, the place was full of smoke, but by sitting low the annoyance was avoided. After the removal of the kettle, Don Pepe put down a quantity of dry weeds, and then, with his knife, scraped the clay and grease off the spit—a piece of iron about four feet high; Don José assisted him to run it through the piece of beef, and to secure one end of the spit in the ground, in such a position as allowed the meat to lean over the blaze. In this manner meat may be nicely cooked; for the heat, ascending on all sides, penetrates it thoroughly, and gives it a peculiarly fine flavour: though a very fastidious person, seeing the quantity of smoke and dust which sometimes concealed the meat from sight, might perhaps have felt reluctant to partake of it at breakfast. When our joint had been sufficiently long in its reclining position, during which

Don José had turned it from time to time, the boy commenced pounding some Lisbon salt in a large wooden mortar, a handful of which he partially sprinkled on the beef; Don Pepe then placed the spit across the hot embers, the ends resting on the bricks to keep the meat clear of the ashes: one or two more changes, and the meat was done "to a turn." The spit was then stuck upright into the ground, and we sat round it, cutting off pieces with our knives, and heartily enjoying this gipsy feast: there was no table in the place. It requires some practice to eat in this manner, as you have to hold the meat with your left hand, and then, seizing on a piece with your teeth, apply the knife with your right hand, directing the edge upwards to cut off the piece; and care must be taken by one who has a long nose, or the tip may be cut off. The beef was particularly tender, and as juicy as mushroooms: as soon as a piece touched my lips it seemed to melt into my mouth. My hands were covered with gravy, and I hastened to wash them in a tin baking-dish, for want of any other vessel.

Having finished our repast, we took a draught of water, and thanked the "good man of the house" for his hospitality; he would have felt insulted had I offered him payment: indeed it is in his power to live like a prince, if he only knew how; for he possesses a league and a half square of fertile land, equal to nine thousand English acres, well-

stocked with cattle. So far as happiness consists in total freedom from care, and a consciousness that want can never approach his dwelling, our host possessed it: his occupations are merely those of a pastoral life; and his pleasures consist in visiting amongst his friends on the Sabbath-day, together with dancing, card-playing, and horse-racing: upon the success of a late race, he staked and won nearly two hundred pounds sterling.

Don Pepe obtained here a pair of the country-made boots; those he had on being of European make, and unsuited to the small stirrups of our saddles. To give an idea of these boots, it is necessary to describe the way of making them. To obtain the materials, a young colt is killed, and the skin of the hind legs, from the fetlocks up to about the middle of the thigh, is taken off; the hair is removed, and while the skin is moist and flexible, it is fitted to the leg and foot of the wearer. That part from the hough, or hamstrings, downwards, forms the foot of the boot, the skin upwards covering the leg. In shaping the hide, so as to make it fit comfortably, one part becomes expanded while another part is contracted; and in this way the foot is entirely covered, except the three first toes, which are generally visible. This description of boot is very light and convenient for riding, and is universally worn by the Gauchos.

Our horses being all ready, those saddled were

quietly exercised for a few minutes to prove their docility; for as yet we were strangers to them, and had to proceed with caution. No fox-hunter ever started for the chase with feelings more joyous and elastic than ours, when resuming our journey. Our exercise had been healthful and invigorating; we had breathed so fresh an atmosphere, and been fanned by such perfumed breezes, that we scarcely felt allied to this dull earth, as we galloped over the plain, but seemed to float through the air, spirit-like.

As usual, we rode through herds of cattle, and we saw large herds of deer, but no ostriches. Our first halt was only for a few minutes, to examine a round stone placed to mark the boundary of an estancia. Upon reaching a tempting spot, covered with flowers and a little shrub emitting an odour similar to verbanum, we dismounted and lay down to rest; the words of Shakspeare's beautiful song, "I know a bank," recurring to my mind, and calling up sweet recollections of home. We did not long indulge this luxurious enjoyment of mental and bodily rest, in a fitting haunt for fairies, and it was well we did not; for we reached our tropilla just at a moment when the sumpter-horse, following our example, laid himself down to enjoy a roll in the grass—unmindful of the looking-glass, bottles, tins, and other fragile articles, with which he was laden; and we were barely in time to save them.

As we rode along conversing upon the pleasures and pains of a pastoral life, Don Pepe narrated the following incident that occurred to himself; which I record, as accurately as possible, in his own words. "I was one day," said he, "taking the hide off a cow, that had died near a laguna, when hearing a noise behind me, I turned round, and saw a bull quickly approaching us; he first ran at the horse of the man who was with me, but, fortunately, his horns struck against the leather of the saddle, and saved the animal, which otherwise must have been killed; the bull then immediately attacked the carcass of the old cow, which he gored with his horns. To escape his fury, I ran to mount my horse; but he was so wild that he would not suffer me to reach the saddle. I then went behind the bull, intending to cut his hamstrings with my knife; but, when I put my hand to lay hold of it, I discovered that it was missing. Nothing remained for me but to run away and hide myself in the long grass; and, frightened as I was, didn't I laugh when I saw the bull tossing up the carcass of the old cow? The man who was with me also ran away, and lay down; for at first he could not take to his horse, as it was secured with a rope. Had I been able to mount, I intended to have cut the fastenings. We remained quiet in the grass until the bull, tired of tossing up the cow, went away." Cows are even more dangerous to a man on his feet than bulls: a

cow will look for you, and keep her eyes open while making her attack; but a bull will not search for a man, and when charging with his horns, he always shuts his eyes; so that, if you are smart, you may avoid him by jumping on one side.

We passed a well, sunk to supply the cattle with water, and surrounded by a strong stake fence to prevent the cattle throwing down the brick wall around its mouth. So little rain had fallen this summer, that wells have been much wanted. We crossed over the river Sanborombon, without any trouble, it being completely dry in consequence of the long drought.

We now approached the estancia of Mr. Newton, a British subject. The house looked very imposing, even at a great distance, by reason of the extent of the surrounding plantation. This property is four leagues square, and well stocked. Mr. Newton was absent in Buenos Ayres, but we were most kindly welcomed by his major-domo, Mr. Ford, and his excellent wife. Her husband being out of doors in the discharge of his ordinary occupations, Mrs. Ford came out to us, where we had halted with our horses, invited us to enter the house and take rest and refreshment, and immediately sent off to the flock and had a lamb dressed for our supper.

The manner of our reception was truly primitive: we were travellers and strangers, and remained at a respectful distance from the house until we were taken

notice of; when we were at once invited to enter, by a lady who had never before even heard of us, and to whom we had no introduction and no recommendation but our appearance and wants, and who set before us all that was at her disposal, and made us welcome. The habits of a pastoral people are necessarily unchangeable. I can now thoroughly comprehend the domestic and nomadic usages recorded in the Old Testament. Inns or hotels cannot be maintained on trackless plains; a traveller must therefore depend solely upon the hospitality of those amongst whom he may sojourn.

Considered as a traveller, I was in a similar situation with the Levite mentioned in Judges xix. 17—20; only substituting the plain for a street. "And when he had lifted up his eyes, he saw a wayfaring man in the street of the city; and the old man said, Whither goest thou? and whence comest thou? And he said unto him, We are passing from Bethlehem-judah toward the side of Mount Ephraim; from thence am I: and I went to Bethlehem-judah, but I am now going to the house of the Lord; and there is no man that receiveth me to house. Yet there is both straw and provender for our asses; and there is bread and wine also for me and for thy handmaid, and for the young man which is with thy servants; there is no want of anything. And the old man said, Peace be with thee: howsoever, let all thy want lie upon

me; only lodge not in the street." Here I have no need of anything, and may be said to have provender for my horses, as in this country it is of little or no value. Journeying onwards, towards sunset I draw near to the first convenient house, and respectfully acquaint the inhabitants that I am a traveller, and have need of shelter for the night, and that I will gladly buy from them a piece of beef, a lamb, or a sheep, as my wants may require. I remain at a little distance from the house with my horses until the messenger returns, who then is pretty sure to inform me that the people spoke kindly to him, and will let all our wants lie upon them. Nothing can be more primitive and beautiful: a journey of this sort awakens more human sympathy and poetry in the soul than a thousand adventures in a civilized country, wearing the highest polish which refinement can confer upon its inhabitants, and where everything may be bought for money—but good feeling.

Mr. N.'s house is of brick, and well built, having a portico in front supported by wooden pillars. Some of the window-frames, sashes, and shutters, were of iron, and imported from Birmingham. Adjoining the portico is a vine, which affords a shade from the sun, the most agreeable that can be well imagined. The garden, enclosed with a strong fence of iron wire, is well stocked with vegetables of various kinds, both tropical and European; though

the potatoes have failed for want of rain. The fruits consist of pears, gooseberries, figs, apples, peaches, quinces, strawberries, oranges, apricots, plums, and walnuts; adjoining the garden is a large peach orchard, and a small plantation of paradise-trees. The pleasure grounds and shrubberies, which of necessity are on a small scale, are defended from the inroads of cattle and sheep by hedges of various prickly shrubs, and by an iron fence. Two sides of the house are sheltered by trees; the remaining two adjoin the yard and out-buildings, amongst which is a steaming apparatus for melting down the flesh of fat sheep and cattle, and a screw-press for baling the wool, which is prepared on the spot for shipment.

During the winter the river Sanborombon rises very suddenly, and on approaching the river Plate becomes a rapid stream; it is therefore necessary to be very watchful, or else numbers of sheep may be drowned, for they are extremely stupid animals. Very recently, a person in the neighbourhood lost nearly six thousand valuable sheep, by the rising of this river. Nearly the whole of such losses in this country are, however, to be traced directly to the want of population: the owner may see his sheep drowned, his cattle straying, and his horses running wild, without any means of preventing the evil; for he has no servants or labourers to come to his aid.

Maté, as usual, was supplied to me in the morning while in bed; and on rising I found the day

bright, and the breeze invigorating. While making my toilet, I heard an English joiner, from Newcastle-on-Tyne, singing one of Wesley's hymns. In passing the cook-house I saw two large ribs of the megatherium, and while looking at them attentively, a person invited me in to look at a large bone used as a seat, which was evidently one of the vertebræ of the same animal. All things being ready for our departure, we were summoned to mount; and we bade farewell to Mrs. Ford, who had impressed me with an exalted idea of her innate kindness of heart and true hospitality, not soon to be forgotten.

I rode a fresh horse to-day, which, though not vicious, was of too mercurial a temperament for my enjoyment of the first few leagues; Don Pepe rode the horse said to be only suitable for the "perch of a wild bird." At the time of starting, our tropilla was at some distance on the plain; and as we drew near, our pack-horse leading the way, they took fright, and my horse snorting and neighing with ardour to join them, warned me of his sprightliness; at last, after a hard gallop of some distance, we got them into the proper direction. Throughout this day's journey I kept on one flank, and Don Pepe on the other, while Don José brought up the rear. This mode of keeping the tropilla in a right line we found to be the best, as it saved us much labour and needless detours; for wherever the mare went the horses followed. We could not remain behind,

and therefore our rate of travelling did not altogether rest with ourselves; one of the gentler sex (as is usual) controlled our movements: if she went seven or eight miles an hour, we must needs do so likewise, and were thankful for breathing-time when she condescended to go slowly. A flock of parrots accompanied us for some distance on our way, but upon reaching a very extensive tract of coarse grass, they dropped behind; their departure was a relief, as their noise was disagreeable.

We continued to ride through this tract of coarse grass for several miles, until we had reached a well, where many persons were watering their cattle. In this case, as in all others, the strongest bird gets to the top of the nest, and therefore the horses are always tacitly allowed by the other animals to drink first; then the oxen slake their thirst, and next the sheep.

Here I saw for the first time the mode of drawing water. Over the well is a frame-work from which is suspended a pulley, through which a hide-rope is passed, one end being secured to the bucket and the other end fastened to a horse. The bucket is made of hide, very large, and of a peculiar form—it is five or six feet long, and open at both ends; the bucket being lowered into the well, the man mounts his horse, and riding a little distance, draws up the bucket, which ascends with both ends uppermost: the adjustment of the rope is so accurate that,

when the horse reaches the extreme length of the rope, one mouth of the bucket leans into a cistern or trough, into which it empties itself. This operation is so rapid and simple, that a man with a change of horses can water two thousand head of cattle in about eight hours.

Another mode of watering the flocks has been recently adopted. Suppose a well to be fifteen feet deep, it must be also about sixteen feet wide; a hose is then made of canvass, the full breadth doubled, and about fourteen or fifteen feet long, open at both ends; one end is somewhat wider than the other, and the canvass is cut in such a way as to form a curve. Around the broad end a strong and heavy wooden hoop is nailed or rivetted—the upper edge of a stable bucket would suit the purpose—and to strengthen the sides of the hose, two ropes are stitched along it, three-quarters of an inch or an inch thick. The narrow end is then fastened to two stakes at the mouth of the well; the broad end is attached by a rope to a horse, as already described; and being lowered into the well it at once sinks sufficiently deep to contain several buckets of water; when it is drawn up by the horse, and empties itself into a cistern or trough for the cattle.

There are thousands of cattle lost in dry seasons in this country, because the owners do not attend to their wells. The natives are altogether useless either for sinking or cleaning a well; such work

is therefore for the most part neglected, because there are not enough foreigners to do it. I may observe in passing, that in general all the natives born and reared out in the country, far away from town life and habits, are seldom induced to enter upon any source of employment or industry not immediately connected with cattle or horses. To reside in a town, or confine themselves to one locality, or the labour of agriculture, would be to them like the confinement of a cage to a wild bird; their sole ambition is to be good equestrians, and their favourite employment that of herdsmen; every other source of trade, commerce, and industry, is either resigned to foreigners or neglected altogether.

The men who were watering their cattle pointed out our way, and we rode on; I feeling delighted with the novelty of the scene. We had not proceeded far when my attention was arrested by a little hillock not completely covered with grass, and which I thought must be a land-mark; but on inquiring from Don Pepe, I learned that a bullock-cart having got stuck in the yielding soil, there being nothing like a road, it had been dug out with spades, and thus made a heap of earth. Such accidents often occur; and ten or twelve oxen are sometimes yoked to a cart to drag it out; but not unfrequently it is broken, or left in the bog until the dry season.

Suddenly I experienced an unusual feeling of thirst, and presently we came quite unexpectedly in

sight of Chascamus Lake: whether the vicinity of water had stimulated my desire for it I know not, but I eagerly rode down to the brink and assuaged my thirst: the moment our tropilla caught sight of water, they galloped on, and refreshed themselves by plunging in; nor would they quit the lake until we drove them out.

As we rested ourselves on the grass, a herd of white colts surrounded us, presenting a most peculiar appearance. The whole scene was lovely in its wildness: the sun had now reached the zenith; the day was beautifully fine, and for miles along the plain we could see the budding May-flowers scattered in profusion, forming a rich velvet-like carpet of green and gold; swans, not far off, floated on the lake, with all their native grace and stateliness, their plumage being seen above the sedge; wild ducks were swimming and diving at our feet; and flocks of the turkey-buzzard were visible at the extreme end of the lake. This landscape, now so beautiful, would present a very different aspect in the heat of summer, or during the cold of winter: water covers nearly one-half of the district in winter, while in summer the higher grounds are arid and dusty from the intense heat. Upon the pastures being covered with water, during winter, depends the supply of grass during the summer; hence the necessity of large estancias with undulating grounds.

After leaving this resting-place, we resumed our

journey much refreshed, and soon drew near to a human dwelling. Two huts, badly built of cane-reeds, rushes, and mud, and neither wind nor weather proof, stood in a spot that once appeared to have been enclosed as a garden. Several women made their appearance, and most kindly invited us to alight and rest; which we declined, asking only for some water. A young girl on the shady side of the house was plaiting her hair—a very favourite employment of all the women here. Water was brought us in a tin vessel by the only good-looking female of the group, and she was really handsome; her long black hair, divided in two plaits, tied together, hung over her shoulders, and reached to her waist. I was extremely thirsty, and the water appeared delicious; but at any time a cup of water presented by the hand of the good and the beautiful becomes a cup of nectar.

Near the residence of these lonely women—lonely because they are unwilling to become domestic servants — General Prudencio Rosas, brother to the late Governor, had enclosed a large tract of land adjoining the lake, with a wall apparently built of mud. Wishing to examine its structure and thickness I rode towards it; but a wall was so great a novelty to my horse that he would not approach it.

As we neared Chascamus we were anxious to find the estancia of Mr. Thwaites, an English gentleman, where we intended to stop for the night; but

unfortunately we did not know his Christian name, nor the name of his estancia, and had some difficulty in finding it. In general, the Christian name is more in use here than it is in England; and to find out any residence, the Christian name of the proprietor should be known. We, however, reached the house of Mr. Thwaites about an hour before sunset, where we were hospitably welcomed, and invited to rest for a day. I had not provided myself with any letters of introduction—except one, which would not be available until I had travelled four hundred miles, when I might require a fresh supply of either funds or horses; but I safely depended entirely on the hospitality of those amongst whom I might be thrown. We were now close to a town containing a garrison of soldiers, and our horses, being very good ones, were likely to excite the cupidity of men who never knew what it was to be honest: our first care, therefore, was for our tropilla; and having satisfied our minds on this point, we turned them out to graze; the mare and two or three of Don Pepe's colts being fettered; the others loose.

The society of Mr. Thwaites and his amiable family added greatly to my enjoyment while partaking his hospitality. His estancia is about five miles from the town of Chascamus; the house is quite an English cottage, brick-built and thatched; the roof projecting over the front, and supported by wooden pillars, forming an agreeable colon-

nade. Paradise-trees, poplars, and the white-flowering acacia, are planted close to the house, so thickly that they overshadow the dwelling; the paradise-tree is very like the mountain-ash, and produces a small blossom of the sweetest fragrance, and afterwards clusters of yellow berries. The grassy sward under the trees before the house was covered with sere and yellow leaves, denoting an approaching autumn; violets were abundant, and at once attract attention by their delicious fragrance; the sun is too powerful for them to thrive on the open plain: like many a gentle spirit they require some friendly and protecting shade, otherwise they droop and wither. The house, with its out-offices, gardens, orchards, paddocks, farmstead, and corral, are enclosed by a deep ditch and hedge; the whole covering an area of about half a mile square. The mode of living in this happy retreat is in perfect accor dance with the dearest recollections of home: a good library, a London-made piano, cheerful fire, Irish servants, and an English cook, all combine to awaken agreeable remembrances of other days and scenes—warming the heart of the traveller with the glow of patriotism and home affections, while he sighs for the land containing the dwellings of those he loves. The number of souls on the estancia is altogether about seventy, requiring fifty sheep and two or three oxen to be killed every week for their sustenance.

Chascamus is a small town thirty leagues distant from Buenos Ayres. It once contained four thousand inhabitants, but at present it is in a very ruinous state, having been in 1839 the scene of revolt against the government of General Rosas. Since that period it has suffered much; all who were implicated being compelled to fly, and leave their property to confiscation. It has a large church in a ruinous state, which is to undergo repairs when subscriptions can be raised. A few stores and shops are to be met with; and several English and other European mechanics are settled here, who are all doing very well. Upon entering the shop of a Frenchman, to buy a few articles, we were accosted by an Englishman, who told us he had been on board the Buenos Ayrean fleet, when it was seized by the British and French squadrons, and received a wound in his arm for which he had a pension of fifty dollars monthly; he was now a sergeant of artillery, his pay being twenty-eight dollars per month. Privates receive twenty dollars per month, besides rations of beef and maté; but a paper dollar at present is not worth more than two-pence halfpenny. North American flour is consumed here, although the land all around is very fertile, and ready for the plough; but where the population is not sufficient to take care of cattle, they cannot be expected to attend to the labour of agriculture.

A very large lake adjoins this town, from which a chain of smaller lakes extends to the river Salado; they are not navigable, and are nearly all brackish.

Don José and Don Pepe had gone to Chascamus to buy some dried fruit and other necessaries, and on their return they went to look after the tropilla, but our horses were not to be found; several of the household set off in pursuit in different directions, but all returned after dark without having seen them. One reported, however, that a young girl taking care of sheep told him that as she was guiding her flock towards home she saw two soldiers driving a tropilla of horses; and when asked why she did not report the circumstance, she said she took care of sheep and not of horses.

Next morning, before day-break, Don José and Don Pepe went in search of the horses, but as the estancia includes an area of several miles, they might ride a long distance before they obtained any information; they returned about noon from different directions without any tidings. Shortly after we were informed that two strange horses were on the grounds, very tired and shod; and we therefore began to fear that the soldiers, who were badly mounted, had taken all or a part of our tropilla to finish their journey. As soon as Don Pepe had taken some refreshment, he went to Chascamus to an officer of his acquaintance and solicited aid and advice; he returned at supper-time with only the assurance

that his friend, with whom he left the marks on the horses, would make every inquiry.

Wherever I went, and whomsoever I met, I heard accounts of horses being stolen: one man had six fine cart-horses taken, which, having never been saddled, could be of little use to the thieves, if intended for a journey; another had devoted all his leisure to the training of a pet tropilla for himself, and when his horses were perfectly docile they were stolen; a third, who was on a journey put out a valuable horse to eat a little grass, and though, as a precaution, he tied him to a long rope, in a few minutes the animal disappeared; a fourth (an Irishman) forcibly illustrated the adroitness of horse-stealers by exclaiming, "Sir, they would scoop a horse out of your eye, if you put him there." The natives, when without a horse, use an elliptical mode of expression, and simply assert that they are "without feet": whatever work is to be done, either in collecting, marking, driving, or taming cattle, must be done on horseback. One cause that may be assigned for the prevalence of horse-stealing is the practice of hiring labourers who find their own horses; the wages of a man with five or six horses not being more than six or seven shillings a day: their food, however, costs him nothing.

Night approached, but no news of the tropilla; and now I began to reflect seriously upon my situation and prospects. I had set out resolved to explore

a circle of eight hundred miles full of interest and novelty, and when just fairly entering upon the ground, I found myself deprived of my much-prized horses, and unable to proceed further. What distressed me most was the loss of time; having allowed myself but a limited period for my journey, and every day being of great value. Political matters were then approaching to a crisis in Buenos Ayres, and I had determined to return to that city within a month. Rashness and despondency are both to be avoided; and *nil desperandum* being my motto, I carefully avoided extremes, and chose the happy medium.

My heart and hopes being set on the journey, I would not return; I therefore resolved either to travel post, or buy two or three horses, as a forlorn hope, in case the post-houses should disappoint me. I now learned to value my own tropilla more than ever; so true is it, that our comforts are prized more highly as they take their flight. However, hearing of a tropilla about a league distant, which the owner had for some time been offering to sell at a hundred dollars each horse, Don José was despatched to negotiate the purchase: upon examination he found them small, young, and thin, but somewhat docile; but when he entered upon a parley for the bargain, the good woman, very unlike her sex in general, threw impediments in the way, and interrupted the negotiation. Beckoning to her husband to follow her outside, she infused a portion of her

own craft and greediness into his spirit, and both returned resolved to exact a large sum from the impatient traveller; the price of the horses was therefore advanced at once to two hundred and fifty dollars. But as I would not give way to the imposition, the negotiation ended here, and I left the mercenary couple to regret the loss of a purchaser.

I was now obliged to turn my thoughts to posting as the last resource; although it is a mode of travelling that did not suit my purpose, as I wished to be able to deviate from the direct road at pleasure. In posting, moreover, there are many inconveniences; such as bad or wild horses, and sometimes a long delay in waiting for them. Under these circumstances, Mr. T. kindly proposed to accompany me to Chascamus, there to make some inquiries. We first, however, called on the justice of the peace, who very courteously offered his sympathy and aid, but said my loss was one to which all were liable, and related how some valuable horses were lately stolen from General Prudencio Rosas, the governor's brother. His parting advice was to proceed with three or four horses, to be used only when disappointed at the post-houses; where he thinks we are sure to get relays of horses and every other accommodation, at an expense of not more than two or three dollars a league.

After leaving "his worship," we were met by an Irishman, who solicited the influence of Mr.

Thwaites to obtain the pardon of his brother, who was imprisoned for having, in company with some natives, in a pulperia, used language amounting to something like high treason: he had consigned the governor, with all his ancestors and posterity, to perdition; for which offence he was to be sent a state-prisoner to Buenos Ayres. Mr. T. kindly and successfully pleaded his cause with the authorities, and the prisoner was set at liberty, promising never to repeat the offence. The Irish population is very dense in this neighbourhood, and they greatly stand in need of the pastoral care of an intelligent and affectionate resident clergyman.

As evening approached we returned homeward, and when near the lake perceived a man coming towards us, who said that the day before, while looking for some horses of his own that had been stolen or had strayed, he found a tropilla which he was informed by some herdsmen probably belonged to us. We at once galloped forward, and sent Don José and Don Pepe along with our informant; they returned about an hour after dark, with the joyful tidings that our much-valued troop had been found. Thus all my difficulties were at once removed, and I could now resume my journey satisfactorily.

Since leaving Buenos Ayres, my way has been through sheep-farms: indeed the whole country, taking that city as a centre, and describing a semi-circle with a radius of thirty leagues, is one vast

sheep-walk. Experience has proved that sheep-farming is an extremely profitable occupation; and as soon as the population is sufficiently increased, the quantity of wool that will be shipped from the river Plate must produce a very sensible effect upon the prices in Europe. Mr. Thwaites pays great attention to purity of breed, in his flocks; and has shown me several producing the finest wool. His Saxony flock, which in 1841 numbered only one hundred and fifty, increased within six years to a thousand: chiefly in consequence of the extraordinary care with which the ewes are housed for two or three days when lambing.

To Mr. John Harratt, as well as to the late Mr. Peter Sheridan, this country is mainly indebted for the wealth it derives from the wool trade; and as I was anxious to obtain the best information respecting this important branch of industry, I applied to Mr. Harratt, who is acknowledged to be the highest authority upon such matters: a communication, the result of his own individual experience, which he favoured me with, will be found at the end of the volume.

CHAPTER III.

Prosperity of Irish immigrants, and profits of sheep-breeding —An Irish settler—The river Salado—Trade in nutria-skins—The Cameron estancia—Hospitality of Don Martinez —Village of Dolores—Primitive fire-place and bedstead— Traffic of Indians for mares'-flesh as food—Rustic supper-party, and airy dormitory—Dogs reared with sheep—Mrs. Methvin and her tropilla—Sleeping upon an ant's nest— Arrival at Tandil—A deserted village and ruined church— The Sierra de la Ventana—Rosas' plan for increasing population—Value of land, cattle, and sheep—Remarkable rocking stone—Different species of armadilloes—Fabulous story of an extinct volcano—Fête in commemoration of the independence of the Argentine Confederation — Gaiety and courtesy of the guests.

We were all on the alert early in the morning, preparing to renew our journey; and we left our hospitable entertainers with a grateful sense of their kindness: I arrived a stranger, and had been treated as a son or a brother. After travelling for several miles through coarse grass, we stopped to purchase bread for our luncheon at a pulperia kept by a family of Basques, where we met a butcher from Buenos

Ayres endeavouring to buy some fat sheep; he wanted them for one shilling and ninepence per head, but they were not to be sold under two shillings each.

A little before sunset we arrived at the house of Mr. Murray, an Irishman, residing on the banks of the river Salado, where we put up for the night. The banks of the river in the neighbourhood of Chascamus are very densely peopled by British subjects, chiefly Irish, all employed on sheep-farms, and for the most part either the sole or joint owners of the flocks: it is somewhat singular that nearly all the Irish are from the county of Westmeath. When a poor man first arrives here, being ignorant of the language, habits and mode of industry peculiar to the country, he seeks to be employed by his own countrymen; if he be sober and industrious he soon saves money, and instead of remaining a shepherd he buys sheep for himself, or joins some of his countrymen in the purchase of a flock. Sheep in small flocks, when properly taken care of, will some years double their number: the usual calculation is that the ewe brings forth two lambs every fifteen months; but making deductions for contingencies, their increase will be on an average one hundred and forty-five per cent. in a year and a quarter: this extraordinary increase, however, is only produced by extreme care and attention.

A poor man, accustomed from his youth to attach

value to lambs as well as sheep, will take good care of his flock, and the increase therefore is always much greater with him than with the wealthy owners of immense flocks, who employ shepherds; for experienced and careful shepherds cannot be obtained in the country for any wages, as all who are sober and steady soon become masters, a large portion of those who remain servants being the idle and worthless. Men employed in ditching earn from five to seven shillings a day, with plenty of beef and mutton; and the most helpless of new comers may, at any work, if only diligent, save twenty shillings monthly. Idleness and drunkenness are the bane of too many, who, if well conducted, might lay a foundation of comparative wealth.

Our host, Mr. Murray, although seventy years of age, had not been long in the country: he had a family of sons and daughters, all very prosperous; and although the house was not as yet provided with its comforts, he made us heartily welcome, and we were entertained in the true spirit of hospitality. As soon as we arrived a sheep was killed and a messenger despatched for wine; we feasted upon roast and boiled meat, pumpkins, bread, and tea. Our arrival seemed to have revived the fire of youth in the spirit of the good old man; for he entertained us until nearly midnight with reminiscences of other days. Being a sportsman, his favourite amusement at present is shooting swans and geese, which

furnish serviceable contributions both to bed and board.

Next morning at an early hour, after a breakfast of roast mutton and tea, we saddled our horses and departed. Crossing the river Salado, at the Paso del Venado, we met a company of five travellers with a tropilla of twenty horses—a gallant cavalcade. The river, then easily crossed, would soon become a deep and rapid current, which cattle must swim over; at a few well-known places, however, there are ferry-boats for passengers. We continued along its banks for some time enjoying the sight of numbers of swans and geese, ducks and widgeon; also flamingoes—a bird of singular beauty, especially when on the wing. This river abounds with good fish, and is so full of nutrias that they allowed us to approach them very closely. The skin of the nutria is used by hatters, and the skins were shipped in quantities for Europe; but at that time they were not allowed to be killed, under a severe penalty: the natives having been compelled to join the militia and carried off to the wars, the profit of killing nutrias for their skins was falling into the hands of foreigners until the trade was prohibited; but as soon as the soldiers are disbanded, the trade will be opened.

Crossing a little stream, we passed close to the estancia Cameron, belonging to the well-known family of Anchorena. It contains twenty leagues

square, and has at least forty thousand head of cattle; but the population on this immense estate being not sufficient to keep the cattle on the rodeos, the beasts have become quite wild, and ran from us as timidly and quickly as the deer: only a few calves, unconscious of danger, stood gazing at us for a moment.

Presently we came to a large lake, its surface dotted with wild fowl: the graceful movements of the beautiful black swans riveted our attention, their dark plumage contrasting with the golden red wings of the flamingo, which latter, reflecting the rays of a strong sun, when several were sitting abreast, looked like a sheet of flame.

Soon afterwards we passed another lake, the lands around which were the highest I had seen as yet, though they did not deserve to be called hills. It was then time for us to look out for our night's abode, and seeing a house at some distance having a small plantation near it, which we calculated we could reach before sunset, we turned in that direction.

On our arrival, as usual, we announced ourselves to be travellers, and asked for the customary accommodation, which was cheerfully granted by the owner, Don M. Martinez, a native gentleman, who politely came out himself to invite us in. The house was situated beside a lake, and the estancia, which embraces an area of forty miles, includes several

lakes, some of salt, others of fresh water. We were most agreeably surprised at the English comforts which accompanied our host's hearty welcome: we sat down to a supper of roast beef, with the accessories of bread, salt, preserves, and brandy punch, followed by good tea. Don Martinez insisted on my occupying his own bed, he himself sleeping on a table. Before we set out next morning our host showed us a tropilla of cream-coloured horses, the most docile and beautiful animals I had seen; and as free from vice as any Arabian. They prove what may be done here with horses by gentle treatment: generally cattle are cruelly used in these plains.

The morning was fine, with a refreshing breeze, when we parted from our hospitable and intelligent host; and as we passed the house, we saw carcasses of beef in abundance laying about, to be devoured by dogs and birds. Having a long day's journey before us, we would not wait for a meat breakfast, but enjoyed the morning meal on horseback, eating biscuits and dried fruits as we rode along, and taking a drink of water.

About noon we approached the village of Dolores, which contains about two thousand inhabitants, and was once in a prosperous state, as the ruins of gardens and houses are very considerable. The church is a small mud-built erection, not large enough for one-tenth of the population. A division of the army

is quartered near the place; their huts, about three hundred and fifty in number, are built of cane reeds, both the sides and roof covered with bulrushes. Several British subjects reside here; and within the last four years, three Irish surgeons have settled in the surrounding country.

Upon asking our way we were shown a car-track which we were to follow; but it was so indistinct that we insensibly lost sight of it, and travelled for some time out of our course: when at last we consulted our compass we found ourselves going due west, instead of south-south-west. We altered our course and steered by compass until we passed near a rancho, where we were confirmed as to the correctness of our route. Dolores is situated on very low ground, and for several miles after leaving it we continued making a gradual but perceptible ascent. The entire country was covered with a small plant like southernwood, and yielding a very agreeable odour; in the distance the plains looked as if covered with stunted heath.

Early in the afternoon, espying a good-looking residence on a rising ground, we resolved to rest there for the night. The occupants were a bachelor and his sister, who, as usual, invited us to enter, and desired us to make all they had our own. Our host and hostess were the owners of the estancia, which was a league and a-half square, and well stocked with cattle and sheep. We were now so far from

the place where we had bought our horses that we thought there was no danger of their returning home, if we allowed them to go unfettered; but it was, however, necessary to keep one of them near the house, tied by one leg to a long rope. Our host desired us to bring our saddles, &c. into the cook-house, the sides of which were plastered, but the ends were open, leaving the winds a free passage. In the centre of the floor a space about four feet square was enclosed with sheeps' trotters sunk in the ground, allowing them to project about three or four inches; the fire was fed with sticks, dried weeds, bones, and fat. Along one side of the house posts were sunk in the ground, about two feet high, on which sticks were lashed with slips of raw hide; and upon these were placed an ox hide, which served as our bed.

As soon as our baggage was stowed away, I walked out before sunset, and in my round counted twelve large dogs belonging to the house. To my great surprise I met with an Indian, whom I found to be one of a company who had come from the direction of Tapalqueen to buy mares for food. Horse-flesh is their favourite meat, and mares they get very cheap, particularly if they be old, for the natives would not be seen mounted upon them; nor will the government allow mares to be killed unless by special license. The Indians bring salt, which they gather along the saline lakes; also ponchos,

bridle-reins, and other articles of their own manufacture, which they barter. For a bag of salt weighing from twenty-five to thirty pounds, they obtain one mare, but for a poncho they will perhaps get fifteen or twenty mares. These men had finished their traffic and were returning homewards with about two hundred and fifty mares young and old.

Having stretched my limbs by walking for some time, which is most refreshing after a long ride, I returned to the cook-house, where I found the mistress preparing our supper. There were two spits stuck in the ground obliquely leaning over the fire, each bearing the side of a sheep. One person after another dropped in, who with the servants made a company of eight; we sat round the fire on low blocks of wood about five or six inches high, and watched the progress of cooking supper. A very large pumpkin was cut in two, and the halves placed on edge in the ashes; afterwards they were filled with hot cinders and nicely baked; the mistress then cleaned the ashes out of the pumpkin with an iron spoon, and stuck each spit in the ground at opposite corners of the fire-place, so that four of us could easily reach one spit; a little water was put into a cow's horn with salt, which was sprinkled over the meat; and a candle placed in a bottle lighted the entertainment. When all was ready, we drew out our knives, and

attacked the sheep vigorously; the pumpkin also soon disappeared. No doubt the Indians, who were close to us in a tent, despatched one of their horses just as speedily, and with as much gusto as we disposed of the sheep. We then partook of maté, which is as necessary to these people as tea to the English.

Our host and hostess, politely wishing us a good night's rest, retired for the night to another house, consisting of two rooms with one window; the labourers went to sleep in a shed at the end of the house; and we, finding ourselves the tenants of the refectory, banquet-hall, or cook-house, whichever the reader may choose to call it, also sought repose; Don José and I took possession of the hide bedstead, while Don Pepe selected a spot upon the floor, with his feet towards the fire. Dogs, cats, and rats, were battling the whole night for possession of our dormitory; most fortunately the cold of approaching winter saved us from the fleas. But though the barking, yelping, and squealing of the animals disturbed our sleep, my waking meditations were agreeably soothed by Moore's plaintive song,

"Oft in the stilly night,"

which kept haunting me.

When passing a flock of sheep in a solitary place, we were attacked by two huge dogs; I looked round expecting to see a house, but there was not one within some miles of us: on inquiry, we found

that in some places it was the custom to rear dogs along with the sheep, who become so attached to their protectors as to live with them in amity: nor will the dogs ever leave the flock. The mode of rearing dogs with sheep is to let the pups suck the teats of the ewes in milk, until they are strong enough to feed on beef. The good qualities of these canine shepherds are highly lauded: but I did not believe all that I was told; as the plan, if so efficacious, would become more general.

I spent two days very agreeably with a Scotch family, named Methvin, where everything was in good working order, and had a look of cleanliness and comfort. The sheep had fine wool, the cattle were very tame, and most of the work-people and servants were British subjects. In addition to his pastoral occupations, Mr. Methvin buys the productions of the country, which he sends to town for sale, and also keeps a store well supplied with goods. Mrs. Methvin had just arrived from Buenos Ayres, a distance of about seventy leagues. This journey was accomplished in six days: Mrs. Methvin rode in a carriage drawn by four horses, and was accompanied by a tropilla of twenty-six horses, and five men. Four horses being always in harness, the remainder of the tropilla were driven along by the men.

We now experienced the discomfort of rain; and for five or six hours we rode through a country covered with water—our horses, for the most part

of the way, being up to their fetlocks in water. In the evening, we halted at some huts called the Bizcachera, and, on asking entertainment, were shown into a cook-house, where was a fire of the bones and skull of an ox, at which some herdsmen were roasting beef. Two of our companions appeared to be of a better class, having clean cotton shirts, and expressing themselves correctly; they seemed about seventeen years of age, and very desirous to get information, particularly regarding the division of time into days, hours, and minutes. We speedily retired to a little hut close by, which was appropriated for our sleeping-room: it was not large enough for a one-horse stable, was quite empty, and had no door; but, luckily, the wind was on the end of the house.

With our saddles for pillows, and some sticks for a bed, we lay down to sleep; our rugs were dry, but our ponchos, which form the most important part of the covering by night, were as wet as a long day's rain could make them. A little before daybreak, Don José appeared very restless; and soon after he got up, exclaiming, "I have been sleeping upon an ant's nest!" When the dawn afforded light enough to examine his coverlet, we found it black with ants.

We then aroused Don Pepe, saddled our horses, and departed.

The sun shone out brightly, enlivening our spirits,

and drying our ponchos; and forgetting the night's inconvenience, we merrily rode along, the hills of Tandil appearing in the distance. Our way lay through an immense extent of long grass, and we soon lost sight of the car-track that was our only guide. Twice we turned back, and thought that we had found the right course, but our compass showed us we were wrong; and finally we were compelled to reach a pulperia, and inquire our way.

During the day we continued to ascend the high grounds towards Tandil. At noon we halted on the side of a hill, where we changed horses and divided some bread; the water we got from a little pool was full of large insects, but we had previously discovered that brandy kills them. Being fatigued, I lay down on the grass, and the hot rays of the sun soon dissolved me in sleep. After a little rest we continued our journey, finding the sight of lofty hills exceedingly grateful, after riding three hundred miles over monotonous plains.

Tandil being the most distant point of this journey, I felt as if this was to be the last day of my toil: it was the only day on which we had felt the pangs of hunger; but the weather was fine, and we amused ourselves occasionally in chasing and killing armadilloes. These make a very good repast; and the partridges were so tame and abundant, that we knocked them down with our whips;

so we were able to make a delicious meal. Before sunset, we arrived in Tandil, after a ride of fourteen leagues.

Having been for some time passing through a variety of estancias of great magnitude, I had made many inquiries as to their formation and management, the results of which are given at the end of the volume. For the accuracy and fulness of the information I am indebted to the valuable assistance of Don Patricio Lynch, a gentleman well known and highly esteemed : he kindly favoured me with a paper upon the subject, which forms the groundwork of the details respecting the establishment and regulation of estancias.

I had received a kind invitation from Mr. Swasey, a North American gentleman, to become an inmate of his house during my stay in this village, and gratefully accepted his hospitality ; there being no public accommodation of any description for travellers.

The village of Tandil is about seventy leagues from Buenos Ayres ; its situation is rather picturesque, being at the base of a range of rocky hills, which run from near Cape Corrientis, for about two hundred miles to the north-west, where they are lost in the plains. About twelve or fourteen houses are occupied by persons engaged in trade in addition to their land occupation ; several were empty. There is not a mechanic of any craft in the place :

only one man can be found who has skill enough to cut out clothes, and he does not know how to sew them together; this part of the work is, therefore, done by the women. Nearly ten years since, a church was built by voluntary contributions, but it is now without a roof; the altar-piece, and another old painting, being stowed away in a guard-house, and utterly ruined by mildew from the dampness of the place. Application was recently made to the government for some aid towards repairing the church, but this was refused on the grounds of the *quoad sacra* character of the building: those who erected and owned the church, it was alleged, should keep it in repair. The graveyard is at the foot of an adjoining hill, where the total absence of a fence, or any other mural memento, indicates the primitive habits of the population. No clergyman resides here, and the dead are buried without any religious ceremony: only once or twice in the year a priest visits the place to celebrate mass, and administer the offices of baptism and marriage. The nearest church is twenty leagues distant.

The Sierra de la Ventana, a hilly range to the southward, is thus described by Mr. Charles Darwin, the naturalist, who visited it in 1832:—"This mountain" (the Sierra de la Ventana) "is visible from the anchorage at Bahia Blanca, and Captain Fitzroy calculates its height to be 3,500 feet—an altitude very

remarkable on the eastern side of this continent. I am not aware that any foreigner, previous to my visit, had ascended this mountain ; and, indeed, very few of the soldiers at Bahia Blanca knew anything about it: hence we heard of beds of coal, of gold and silver, of caves, and of forests; all of which inflamed my curiosity, only to be disappointed. When we reached the foot of the main ridge, we had much difficulty in finding any water: at last we discovered some by looking close to the mountain. I do not think nature ever made a more solitary, desolate, pile of rock—it well deserves its name of Hurtado, or separated: the mountain is steep, extremely rugged and broken, and so entirely destitute of trees and bushes, that we actually could not find a skewer to stretch out our meat over the fire made of thistle-stalks. The strange aspect of this mountain is contrasted by the sea-like plain which not only abuts against its steep, but likewise separates the parallel ranges. The uniformity of the colouring gives also an extreme quietness to the view; the whitish gray of the quartz rock, and the light brown of the withered grass of the plain, being unrelieved by any brighter tint. The dew, which in the early part of the night wet the saddle-cloths under which we slept, was in the morning frozen, from the sharpness of the cold. I supposed we were already at a considerable elevation, although to the eye the plain appeared horizontal. In the morn-

ing (9th September), the guide told me to ascend the nearest ridge, which he thought would lead me to the four peaks crowning the summit. Climbing up such rough rocks was very fatiguing; the sides were so indented, that what was gained in the first five minutes was often lost within the next: at last, when I reached the ridge, my disappointment was extreme in finding a precipitous valley, as deep as the plain, which cut the chain transversely in two, and separated me from the four points. This valley is very narrow, but flat-bottomed. Having ascended to the top of the second peak by two o'clock, but got there with extreme difficulty, I was therefore obliged, from excessive fatigue, to give up the two higher peaks. I was, on the whole, disappointed with this ascent; even the view was insignificant: a plain like the sea, but without its beautiful colour and defined outline. The scene, however, was novel; a little danger, like salt with meat, makes it the more relished. On our way we saw great numbers of deer, and near the mountain a guanaco. The plain that abuts against the Sierra is traversed by some curious gullies, of which one was about twenty feet wide, and at least thirty deep; we were therefore obliged to make a considerable circuit before we could find a pass."

Tandil having been originally intended for a frontier post, and place of defence against the Indians, has a fort mounting four small guns; the frontier,

however, has been so rapidly extended, both to the south and west, that Tandil has ceased to have any value as a military outpost, and has subsided into a place of trade for the surrounding population. Estancias already encroach on the Indian hunting-grounds, for forty leagues westward; and similar establishments will soon reach along the shores of the Atlantic, as far as Bahia Blanca; the Christian population, however, is very thin. A few years ago General Rosas seized all the women in Buenos Ayres of a doubtful character, and sent them towards this frontier, with strict orders for their detention; hoping to augment the population by that means.

Land in this neighbourhood sells at about eighteen thousand dollars for a league square; which, at the high exchange of threepence each dollar, gives 450*l.* sterling, being no more than eightecnpence per English acre, for the most fertile grass lands, ready for the plough. Horned cattle, as they run, good and bad, sell at fifteen dollars each, and sheep at from one shilling and sixpence to three shillings per dozen. These sheep are of the commonest description; but may be so improved by attention as to become, in two or three years, valuable for their wool. A very industrious Irishman, a Mr. Hanley, was lately in this neighbourhood, who bought eight thousand sheep at one shilling and sixpence per dozen — that is, four copper rials—which, at the present rate of exchange, is no more than

three-halfpence each : this is somewhat cheaper than eggs; for just now I cannot obtain an egg for less than threepence. Sheep increase and multiply without giving their owners any trouble, either in winter or summer, they are therefore considered of little value; while domestic fowl require more care and attention than their owners are willing to bestow upon them : indeed, eggs are likely to remain scarce until the hens are taught to deposit them ready boiled, with a spoon and salt beside them !

We set out one morning, to visit a celebrated rocking stone in this neighbourhood : it occupies a slanting position, on the highest peak of a lofty hill, seeming to overhang the precipice; and it is so delicately poised that the timid would shrink from its shadow, lest the slightest breeze should cause their death by its fall. It is twenty-four feet high, and the circumference of the thickest part is one hundred feet. The entire hill is formed of granite rocks, tossed into a thousand shapes; at its base are some of the largest detached rocks I ever saw. The view from the summit was impressive: grassy plains and fertile valleys extended on every side to the horizon, and were covered with countless herds of cattle, while eagles were startled from their eyries at our feet; but the absence of human habitations gave the scene a character of desolation and solitude, producing sensations more allied to that of sublimity than that of beauty. I amused myself in

examining the endless variety of rock plants; and my attention was particularly attracted by one of those fairy-like air-plants which live upon the atmosphere alone, and derive no nutriment from the earth; requiring only a fragment of rock or a tree from which to suspend their delicate tendrils and aërial flowers.

Whilst I was occupied in this way, Don José and Don Pepe descended to the base of the hill and made abundant preparations for our supper: in a very short time they snared a score of partridges, with no other implement than a long cane-reed having a noose of horse-hair at the end, which is used for this purpose. They also killed an armadillo.

Mr. Darwin, the naturalist, informs us that there are four species of armadillo, namely the *Picky*, the *Peludo*, the *Apar*, and the *Mulita*. The first being found as far south as latitude 50°, which is about ten degrees further than any other kind; the *Mulita* is found only as far south as the Sierra Tapalqueen. The four species have nearly similar habits; but the *Peludo* is nocturnal, while the others wander by day over the open plains, feeding on beetles, larvæ, roots, and even small snakes. The *Apar*, commonly called *Mataco*, is remarkable for having only three moveable bands, the rest of its tesselated covering being nearly inflexible; it has also the power of rolling itself into a perfect sphere, and in this state is perfectly safe from the attack of dogs and other

animals: indeed I think it would allow itself to be kicked about as a football without unrolling. The mode of cooking armadilloes is to roast them in their own armour: they are most delicious food, somewhat similar to the sucking-pig, but more delicate and tender.

After supper, we amused ourselves in rifle shooting; Americans, British subjects, and natives joining in the sport: the Americans proving to be the most skilful. The mark was a silver dollar, and the distance, I think, was a hundred yards.

Being introduced by Mr. Swasey to Mr. Arana, son to the Minister for Foreign Affairs at Buenos Ayres, this gentleman, perceiving that I was interested in exploring the country, told me that there was an extinct volcano not far off, and suggested that we should form a party to go to see it on the following morning. As I had never heard of this geological feature of the Pampas, although familiar with most published works on the country, I was glad of an opportunity of viewing it, and therefore resolved to defer my journey for another day, that I might join the exploring party. I fell in with a man who gave me a long account of the crater of the volcano, its position and extent; and though at first sceptical as to the fact of its existence, yet as many persons had seen, and could describe it, I could not longer withhold credence.

Next morning, at the time appointed, we were all

ready mounted, and well supplied with lines to fathom the depth of the crater: we waited for some time expecting our guide, but in his stead we received a message, saying he was busy making pastry for the political festival of the 25th of May, to commemorate the independence of the Argentine Provinces. This strengthened my incredulity, and I felt more disposed to turn my face towards Buenos Ayres than towards the mountain; but politeness forbade.

We then proceeded to the foot of the hill, where a herdsman lived who was familiar with the spot; but on entering his hut we learned that he was at some distance attending to a troop of horses: his family, however, directed us to another herdsman, who was considered to be equally familiar with the object of our search. On reaching this second hut we were encouraged by four or five women, who repeated the popular belief in the existence of this crater; but here again the man of the house, unfortunately, was from home: his wife, however, assured us he knew the place well, and when collecting sticks for fire, her husband had shown her the gloomy mouth of the cavern, but she was afraid to go near the edge. Another woman, also, told us she knew a man who went down with a lighted candle; and some one else informed us that a man had tried to reach the bottom, but could not do so, although he tied four lazoes together. The woman who had herself seen

the place promised that if we proceeded alone, and went by her directions, we should be successful; she then pointed out two hills, asserting that in one of them was the cavern: but she had forgotten which. Strong in our belief of the woman's credibility, we set out, and on reaching the nearest hill, examined it, and then the more distant one: but without success; and after a few hours' exploration we returned to the village, without having seen anything like a volcano. Anxious to ascertain the facts of the case, I then offered a reward of thirty dollars to any one who would conduct me to the crater of this extinct volcano; and as every one in the village had heard of its existence, and knew its whereabouts, I made sure of soon having a host of applicants.

Meantime I sent for the man whom I had first fell in with, and offered payment if he would be my guide: yet although he had described the place with graphic minuteness the night before, when I pressed him, he doubted if he could find the exact spot, as he had only seen it at a distance. I then saw a boy who knew a man who knew the place; but on inquiry I found that he was thatching a house, and could not come. Resolved to sift the matter, I sought out the herdsman whom I had seen before: he knew that the fearful cavern was there, though he never had the curiosity to go and see it; but his wife did, and he promised that she should accom-

pany us to the spot next morning. While we were at supper, a soldier of the militia came in and was eloquent in his description of the place; but on my offering him a reward if he would be our guide, he excused himself by saying he should be on guard next day. It was evident that the extinct volcano existed only in idea: yet with what minute details of seeming facts had this fabulous crater been described.

Having been invited to partake of the festivities commemorative of the independence of the country, we went to the house of the commandant, and passed the night most cheerfully and agreeably; one or two magistrates, Mr. Arana, and all the influential and respectable people in the neighbourhood being present. Maté, sweetmeats, and sundry other refreshments were served. Minuets, waltzes, polkas, and some dances peculiar to the country, were danced to the music of violins and guitars, and kept up until towards morning, when we had tea and separated. The manners and bearing of the guests at this little festivity, although in one of the most secluded villages in the province, were marked by the courteous grace and etiquette of Almack's, combined with a universal gaiety and air of enjoyment rarely seen in the select assemblies of European capitals, and more resembling the genial cheerfulness and freedom of a family party.

CHAPTER IV.

A chimney the indication of comfort—Residence and family of Don Ramon Gomez—Disadvantages of want of labourers—Influence of pastoral life on the mind—Effects of night dews on horses — Earnings of Irish labourers, and market for labour—Supper-party in a cook-house—Standard of good housewifery—The reality of Arcadian life—The fork a test of civilization — Asul, the boundary of Indian territory—Expedition of Rosas against the Indians, and his treaty with them—Burning grass on the Pampas—A happy old woman —Cheerfulness a Christian virtue—Indian huts—The commandant of the Indian frontier.

Having now reached the extreme southerly point of my journey, I turned my face towards Buenos Ayres; but in doing so I proposed to keep along the Indian frontier, with the intention of acquiring information regarding the aborigines of the country.

The day was fine; and our horses, fresh from their rest, moved under us with spirit and speed. Our way lay through deep grass, which rendered it at times quite impossible to perceive the car-track; but with the aid of our compass, and making good

observations, we journeyed onwards very pleasantly, although we knew nothing of the road. Herds of cattle were everywhere seen — some very wild, others comparatively tame—and numbers of deer, ostriches, and wild fowl; but there were no sheep, and, one or two ranchos excepted, no population.

Early in the afternoon we reached a small river, the Chapaleofu, on the opposite side of which stood a very nice-looking brick house with a chimney; which latter is a never-failing evidence of internal comfort. Natives of the old class never have fires in their houses; but the rising generation, and all those desirous of cultivating European habits of in-door life, invariably build fire-places in their houses. Around this quiet dwelling was a small plantation, where some of the family were pruning trees: the whole aspect of the place was most inviting, and I resolved to stop there for the night, if we could but manage to cross the river. Don Pepe started along the bank northward, while I went a short distance to the south, to find a fording-place. I soon gave up the search, and lay down on a grassy bank by the river's side, observing the movements of a fox near his hole. Having waited the return of Don Pepe for a very long time, Don José expressed the apprehension, which I had also felt, that some accident might have happened, and proposed to go in search of him. We feared that, in attempting to ford the stream, his horse might have

sunk in the mud. The sun was rapidly sinking to the horizon when I mounted my favourite horse, and went in pursuit of our companions; but I had not gone a mile before I was relieved from my anxiety by seeing them returning; when I learned from Don Pepe that the late rains had so swollen the stream that he could not find a safe spot to cross. I then proposed to drive over the tropilla, believing that, from the narrowness of the stream, there could not be much danger; but we finally resolved to traverse the south course of the river, in which direction we saw a house snugly nestled in a large plantation, where we might stop, in case a passage of the river could not be made; and as this proved impracticable, we finally reached the house, and, as usual, asked for entertainment.

We were received with a politeness and cordiality truly acceptable, by the proprietor of this place, Don Ramon Gomez, a native gentleman of great intelligence. His lady, surrounded by a large family of children, was seated in the porch of the cottage; which, from its size, simplicity, and neatness, would be looked on as a charming retreat for a poet or philosopher. Donña Gomez, who when young must have been a fine-looking woman, wore a cap; the first I had seen during my visit to the country, as the ladies rarely wear any covering for the head within-doors but their luxuriant hair. Close to the dwelling was a coach-house and other out-offices;

shaded walks of willows led down to the river side, along which were planted fragrant trees and flowers. A large flock of sheep were coming into the fold, and some of the children were running to meet them, as if they were their playmates. In the distance the eye rested on the rocky hills of Tandil; which just then reflected the rays of the setting sun. In this delightful climate, and in such a sweet spot, the family spend nearly all their time in the open air.

The apartment in which supper was laid was low, and had no ceiling; but the timber of the roof and the thatch were free from dust and cobwebs, and the grate was so bright that it would not soil a silk handkerchief. The appearance of the supper-table, with its bright knives and forks, spoons, and glasses, set out in European fashion, presented a brilliant contrast to the more homely feasts to which we had been accustomed latterly. We partook of an abundant and luxurious repast, consisting of soup, roast and boiled meats, pumpkins, potatoes, wines and fruits.

The estancia is twelve square leagues in extent, and covered with cattle, but has very few sheep: the owner bitterly lamented that all industry was impeded for the want of people, and showed me various attempts at improvement in building, planting, and gardening, which he had been obliged to abandon for want of labourers; remarking that the

industrious shepherds so soon accumulated the price of a flock of sheep for themselves, that no one could calculate upon a regular supply of labour. Our conversation turning upon reptiles and beasts of prey, Don Gomez showed me a stuffed lizard about three-quarters of a yard long, as a specimen of those that are found in the neighbourhood (which are not, however, numerous), and also some skins of the tiger-cat, one of which he presented to me: this animal is not often found, nor is it dangerous.

During my journey I had not hitherto heard of or seen lions or tigers, but here I heard of cattle having been destroyed by them. They are said to find shelter in the high grass, and amongst the hills; they cannot, however, be very numerous, as they are not dreaded by the population, nor is the destruction of cattle very frequent.

Upon taking our departure, the eldest son of our host very kindly came to show us the ford over the river, which we crossed close to a little cascade; and having put us on the car-track, we trusted chiefly to our compass. We passed more deer on this day's journey than upon any previous one: I counted at least fifty in one herd. As a general remark I may add that wherever the cattle were tame, the deer and ostriches were so too; and *vice versa*.

About noon we saw a quiet little lake on our right, towards which we turned, and seated on the bank enjoyed our usual breakfast of bread, raisins, and water.

After a morning's ride of a few miles, to rest and breakfast by the side of a stream, and then sleep in the sunshine and dream of those we love, is most delightful: it recalls poetic ideas of pastoral life, as pictured by Milton and Shakspeare; but in reality the mind would become torpid, and insensible to those exquisite emotions which the cultivation of the intellect alone can awaken. I doubt very much whether the people of this country, or any other similarly circumstanced, could possibly experience those feelings which are described by the terms rapture, ecstacy, and transport. The dulness of the mind, and the obtuseness of man's sensations, in a primitive state, may be the reason why the Deity so frequently condescended to commune with the patriarchs through the medium of their senses.

After enjoying a most delightful rest, we saddled fresh horses, and continued our journey. One of our difficulties, so long as we are passing through a thinly-peopled country, is to know when and where to stop for the night. If we approach a house at two or three o'clock in the afternoon, we know that it is too soon to halt; but were we to journey onwards, night might overtake us before we reached another dwelling. It is absolutely necessary to halt early, so as to give the horses time to become perfectly cool before the night dews begin to fall; for if this precaution be neglected, their backs immediately become sore. Our horses were

beginning to suffer from the long journey, and I feared that, from their general condition and the tenderness of their backs, we were likely to be left "without feet," as the gauchos say. Towards the close of this day's ride one of the horses became so tired that he could not keep up with us, and we were compelled to leave him behind; although we made every merciful effort to drive him to a house which we saw at some distance.

On reaching the house we saw some Irishmen making a ditch, with whom I had a long conversation, in which I learned that this description of labour is the most profitable: these men were earning, according to their own calculation, ten to twelve shillings a day, and yet they were complaining; although they have plenty of meat, and can save at least from thirty to forty shillings a week. The reason they receive such enormous wages is because few of their class come so far south, and the natives will never take a spade in their hands; these hard-working fellows, therefore, get almost whatever they ask. If ten or fifteen thousand of the starving population of Ireland were scattered over this country they would be all welcomed, and find plenty of work at good wages. The facility of obtaining the necessaries of life here is very great: the quantity of beef and mutton wasted in this country, as food for dogs, pigs, and vultures, would maintain double the population.

We stopped for the night at this hut. The cook-house, where we ate and slept, was a framework of timber interlaced with cane-reeds, grass, and bul-rushes, but without mud, or plastering of any kind. After sunset all the inmates began to assemble: the party consisted of a very old woman and her daughter, the mistress of the house, who were making maté; two Irishmen; a soldier on a journey; three young men, members of the family, who were playing cards; and an Indian woman, who had a very dejected appearance, and sat on the floor by my side.

Instead of sitting like the natives on low seats consisting of blocks of wood, I found it easier to recline on the ground, and lean my arm on the block of wood, or else to sit cross-legged like a Turk. When seated on the skull of a horse, or a small log of wood about six inches high, as the natives sit, I found my loins ache, and my legs and knees so cramped, that in a few minutes I was obliged either to stand up, or coil myself into a small compass on the floor. Our fire was, as usual, bones, sticks, and tallow, and across it were slanted two spits laden with beef, while over it hung a pot with mutton boiling, and pumpkins garnished the corner. A soldier's bayonet stuck in the floor served as a candlestick: it was the first time in my life that I had seen a bayonet applied to any useful purpose. To each of us was given one or two cobs

or ears of maize which we roasted in the ashes; but, before mine was half done, hunger became so urgent, having had nothing since our frugal breakfast, that I began to eat. The Indian woman next to me managed hers very well: she kept it continually turned, for she sat rolled up in a little heap so close to the fire that it was no trouble to reach it.

When we had finished our meal, a rag was handed round to wipe our fingers—a luxury greater than a table napkin at home; then thanking our hostess for her hospitality, she retired, and we made preparation for passing the night. On clearing the floor we found there was not space to accommodate us all, so two sons of our hostess and an Irishman at once removed their beds to the open air, under the shelter of a large bullock-waggon; although the night was very cold. Observing a litter of whelps in one corner of the place, I arranged my bed so as to have them lying at my feet to keep them warm, but in so doing I found myself in the draft between two openings intended for doors; I therefore changed my position and placed myself by the side of one of the labourers, and soon we were all sound asleep. I had by this time become quite indifferent as to where I slept, provided the ground was swept clean; though I began to think that the cleanliness and comfort of bed-rooms and kitchens were the most accurate standard by which to judge of the civilization of a people, or the neatness and notability

of the mistress; and wherever I travel in future, the sleeping accommodation shall serve as a test of the good qualities of the lady of the house. It is very pleasant to talk of Arcadian life and pastoral simplicity, and to picture our first parents reposing in a beautiful garden on a bank of violets, beneath umbrageous trees, while we ourselves are reclining on downy cushions in a spacious saloon filled with those elegancies and works of art on which the eye loves to dwell; but the reality is different. To sleep on the ground, whether under a roof or out of doors, is unfavourable to poetic sensibilities, and by no means so comfortable as resting between clean sheets on a good bed.

There is another, and perhaps more unerring test of civilization: the fork. In this country, amongst the poorer classes a fork is never used, and so long as such is the case, I defy the people to give any evidence of improvement.

The use of a fork is avoided, because it would occasion trouble, and necessitate the adoption of other domestic habits which are also considered troublesome: a knife and fork require a plate, which needs to be placed on a table; for to sit on the floor, with a plate, knife, and fork, would be too ludicrous and inconvenient even for this paradoxical people, however amusing it may be in a pic-nic party; therefore a table must be had. This want creates another: a table involves the necessity

of a chair; and thus the consequences resulting from the use of forks involve a complete revolution in the household. I am not one of the silver-fork school—far from it; but had I the power once wielded by General Rosas, I would issue a decree to proclaim the domestic dynasty of "Don Prong, the Fork," and establish the bedstead as a family throne: I would cause the church to publish a canon that no baptized child should be suffered to sleep (except by chance) on the ground; and another canon should release all wives from their vow of obedience, unless the husband provided a sufficient number of knives and forks for the household.

My worthy host being the proprietor of about two leagues of land, his house and garden might contain all the food and comfort that any reasonable person could desire, and he and his family live in a state of affluence; yet, from the appearance of the place, and the mode of living adopted by the household, a stranger might fancy the owner was not worth twentyshillings. The fork would change all that.

In the morning I resumed my journey towards the Asul, which is the political boundary of intercourse with the Indians; and were I to believe all the reports of the dangers of travelling along this line, it would be necessary to take precautionary measures of safety: in this country, however, and I suppose in all others thinly inhabited, dangers

imagined by fear, and magnified by rumour, generally disappear when they are approached.

After a few hours' ride we entered the Asul, which is a town of recent origin, and at present little more than an assemblage of ranchos. In the centre is a guard-house with a few pieces of artillery; there is also a small church, and a flour-mill worked by mules. I observed several brick houses in progress of erection, and found that there were many tradesmen at work; some of them British, others from the Continent. The population is about fifteen hundred; and the Indians along the frontier have always kept the inhabitants of Asul in a state of continued alarm. The only real check the Indians received was from General Rosas, who commanded an expedition against them in the year 1833, which achieved such signal success that, on his return, he was popularly styled "The Hero of the Desert." This war would have been one of extermination, but the Indians, despairing of maintaining their position, begged for peace. This was the object their triumphant enemy sought to accomplish; since having first reduced them to a state of trembling apprehension by the terror of his name, he the more readily made peace with them on his own terms.

The conditions of this treaty were very simple. The Indians bound themselves to live within the range of their own territory, and never to cross the frontier, or enter the province of Buenos Ayres,

without permission. They also undertook to render the Governor military service whenever called upon, and to act as quiet citizens and loyal subjects. For this concession on their parts, each cacique now receives from the Government a sufficient quantity of mares, or colts, for food, according to the number of his followers, and a small allowance of yerba, tobacco, and salt: the whole cost to the State being only about six paper dollars per month, for each Indian, in time of peace; and in war about fifteen dollars. The number of mares at present supplied to them for food, is somewhat less than two thousand per month; and in this economical way, peace with those then predatory and nomadic tribes is purchased. The administration of this highly important treaty was committed to the care of Don Pedro Rosas y Belgrano, who was very popular amongst all classes—Indians, natives, and foreigners.

The entire province is now free from the presence of an Indian, as none can cross the border without a pass, under a severe penalty; and although robberies, and perhaps murders, may be occasionally committed along the frontier by Indians (to which, however, they are frequently encouraged by deserters from the army), yet such acts are very rare, considering the great extent of boundary along which the Indian claims to roam. The number of mounted lancers from the Indian tribes attached to the cantonments around the Asul and Tapalqueen, is about

three thousand; but if needful, double that amount could be obtained by applying to the caciques in the interior, who entertained exalted ideas of the power and greatness of General Rosas.

Few things can more strikingly illustrate the superiority of one race over another than this fact: although these Indians still possess a territory much greater in extent than that which is possessed by the Spanish race, yet such is their stupidity, that they receive as paupers a monthly allowance of horse-flesh for food; whereas, if they only followed the example of their masters, they would soon be equally rich in flocks and herds.

After exploring the town a little, I called on the commandante, Don Pedro Rosas y Belgrano, and on presenting my passport was very courteously received by him, and furnished with some desirable information.

Resuming my journey early in the evening, we reached a ruinous-looking house, which on inquiry we found had been accidentally burned, through setting fire to the coarse grass of the country: as often happens during the heat of summer. We remained for some time opposite the door, calling out the usual salutation "Ave Maria;" but not receiving the usual response "Sinpecado concebida" (conceived without sin), Don Pepe rode over to a woman whom we saw at a distance, and asked for a night's accommodation. She at once hastened to

the house, kindled a fire, and in a very short time we were seated around the half of a fat sheep well roasted.

It is related of Dr. Johnson that, in the course of a conversation on the subject of happiness, an ancient dame, in opposition to the sage's opinion, instanced herself as a proof that happiness might be enjoyed on earth :—"I am happy, Doctor," said she. Peter Pindar has versified the doctor's churlish reply,—

> "Madam, you're foolish, ugly, old and poor,
> Therefore you *can't* be happy, I am sure."

But this old woman of the Pampas, who was neither rich nor handsome, seemed perfectly happy ; she was very cheerful, although very old. Cheerful persons, I believe, are always happy ; certainly they practically show more gratitude to God than the gloomy and discontented. St. Paul frequently inculcates "rejoicing," as if it were an active duty of the Christian. Of course temperaments differ ; but the real or assumed gloominess of some Christians is injurious to their cause, though they may think it is promoted by a stern gravity. A Christian who is always looking to heaven as the only depository of his joys, plainly intimates that he is not happy here, and has not yet learned gratefully to partake of the blessings bestowed upon men, and enjoy the boundless sources of harmless delight with which God has filled the world.

Next morning we started for Tapalqueen. Our route lay through tall, coarse grass, and all round us were the toldos or huts of the Indians; each having the fighting-lance of its owner standing close to his dwelling, one end being stuck in the ground. Upon reaching the cantonment, about noon, I left Don Pepe with the tropilla on the plains, and with Don José entered the village.

Chance at once introduced me to Col. Echavaria, the Commandant, to whom I presented my passport as a matter of etiquette, and expressed a desire to make some inquiries. He at once pressed me to take up my abode at his house, and there to remain so long as I had anything to learn regarding the Indians. This invitation afforded me great satisfaction; for I had a longing desire to visit the aborigines and compare them with their Christian brethren; and from the colonel's long residence amongst them, I knew he was well qualified to give me the most minute and authentic information regarding their habits and religion. I therefore gladly accepted his invitation, and became his guest.

CHAPTER V.

Tapalqueen—Traffic of the Pampas Indians—Filthy state of their huts—Influence of Colonel Echavaria over the Indians—Native method of weaving—Indian women—Sun worship and sacrifices—Government of the Indian tribes—Their physiognomy and modes of painting the face—Robust health and youthful aspect of the men—Clothing of men and women—Their toldos or huts of hide—Belief in a good and an evil spirit—Funeral rites and ceremonies—Lasting grief of relatives—Traditionary ideas of a past and future state—Division of the years into months—Celestial portents—Chiefs, or caciques—Crimes and punishments—Military government and mode of warfare—The manchi or medicine-man, and his methods of cure—Forms of wooing and wedding—Polygamy—Servile condition of the wives—Mode of rearing infants—Food and drink—Feasts, dances, and amusements.

For the first time in my life I was now in free intercourse with the heathen, and had an opportunity of observing their habits and manners.

Tapalqueen is an assemblage of houses and ranchos, partly occupied by the Indians, and partly by the Spanish race, engaged as soldiers and traders. It is designed to be a commercial depôt for all the various tribes of Indians that wander over the sur-

rounding territory. Here they come to exchange their produce, consisting of the skins of animals and garments made of wool, for trinkets, edge-tools, and other hardwares. The sale of spirits is prohibited; but alcohol is obtained not far off, and drunk to excess by both sexes. Upon obtaining a license, the men proceed to the interior of the province, where they barter their produce for mares; a mare being worth about half-a-crown. The plains all around are studded with Indian huts, or toldos, and, in my rides amongst them, I was struck with their extreme filth and nastiness: the carcasses of horses were lying about in various states of putrefaction. The only part of the animal eaten is that which is fat; the legs and other fleshy parts being thrown away: the poorer animals they do not kill.

I was accompanied in my rides by Colonel Echavaria, and whenever we dismounted to speak to the women or children they appeared much devoted to the colonel, who exercised the most kind and paternal care over them. At several huts the women were weaving: it is a most tedious process, the thread being passed through the warp by the fingers; and thus a month is spent in producing a garment that would be woven in Yorkshire in an hour. The men sometimes work on estancias, but the women never. Their huts are seldom cleaned; but when they become insufferably filthy they are pulled down and erected upon a clean spot. In one hut

that we entered, a good-looking young woman took pains to show us how she used her loom. Sheepskins were their beds. Another reclined on the ground suckling her child; her skin was very fair, and her limbs small, round, and well-proportioned: children are suckled for two or three years. Young girls take great pains with their hair, which is usually dark and long; they anoint it with mare's-grease, and let it hang either loosely over their shoulders, or divided into two plaits: mare's-grease is always used in anointing and beautifying the hair.

This tribe of Indians, amongst whom I was then rambling, was the Pampas tribe; but they do not differ much in their habits from the surrounding tribes. In their notions of religion they vary a little; the Pampas Indians entertaining a religious reverence for the sun, which they look upon as the source of all things: a superstition probably derived from the Peruvians. When they sleep they lie with their faces towards the east, and if, in a drunken fit, they should fall asleep in any other position, they fear some evil will come upon them; they also bury their dead in a similar position. They have no traditionary knowledge of a Sabbath, nor any religious festivals or forms of worship; but they have a superstitious dread of an evil spirit, whom they are desirous to propitiate. In times of sickness, war, drought, or any other calamity, the women engage

in a religious dance in honour of the sun; and they also retain a custom which shows that the tribes originally offered up sacrifices to some deity. They take the heart of some animal—a sheep, colt, or calf —and stuff it with flesh, yerba, or, perhaps, tobacco; and then, as an act of atonement, or propitiation, throw the heart into some lake or river.

None of the tribes in this part of the Republic have had any Christian instruction; nor have they any written language. They are very docile, and more disposed to peace than war. The entire tribe is governed by two great and influential caciques, occupying the territory extending as far as the Andes, and stretching a long distance both north and south. The Peguenches are the most influential tribe; and to this tribe I refer chiefly, though their habits are generally similar. In investigating this subject I have been aided by my kind host, Colonel Echavaria, who has resided amongst them for many years. I have also consulted the writings of Cruz, whose well-known work supplied me with valuable information.

The Indians of this region consist of four distinct tribes, speaking different languages; but in their physiognomy and corporeal appearance they present a strong family likeness to each other. They have no tradition respecting their origin, other than that their ancestors were born in this country.

I have taken much pains to ascertain the accuracy

of the reports which give to the Patagonians a gigantic stature; but I am well assured they are fabulous. I have conversed with several persons of intelligence who resided amongst them; and by whom they are represented as being of greater stature than the other Indians, but not taller or more athletic than the English or Germans.

The features of all the tribes who wander in these regions are regular; but, besides boring their ears, from which they suspend a heavy ring of metal, they paint the face with different colours: some cover the face entirely with a band of black paint, leaving only the ears and throat free; others paint a streak two fingers in breadth across the eyes and nose to the ears; some colour only the cheeks, others only the nose; many paint the eyebrows, and imitate moustachios; a few the neck and eyelids: in fine, each one, as whim directs, paints the face according to his or her fancy. The custom of wearing ear-rings and colouring the face is most common amongst the male and female Indians of the Pampas, who purchase the colours from the Peguenches and Guilliches. The hues preferred are black, red, blue, and white; white being merely employed in marking lines to define the edges of the other colours. The black is procured from a peculiar stone called "yama," which is ground by friction against another until a very fine powder is produced; a little lamb-suet is then added, and the result is a soft, unctuous, and

very lustrous pigment. The red colour is extracted from a stone called "colo;" the blue from a stone called "codiu," and the white from the "palan" stone; yellow is procured in a similar manner.

The natural complexion of these Indians generally inclines to red, but becomes somewhat darker from exposure to the sun and weather. Their hair is black; the eyes are dark and piercing; the nose is generally flat; the mouth large and not well formed; but their teeth are white, even, and strong. Their limbs are muscular and well formed; the feet and hands being small.

The features of the women bear a great similarity to those of the men, but with greater softness, as natural to the sex. None that I saw were remarkable for beauty, though some few girls were good-looking. These people live free from cares or fatigue; and, being of strong constitutions, the men seldom grow gray before they have attained sixty years; nor do they wrinkle or become bald until very old.

There are many octogenarians amongst them who still have a youthful look, their teeth being perfect, and their heads covered with hair. Their clothing chiefly consists of two cloaks, thus disposed: one folded lengthways is rolled round the waist to the extent of two-thirds its length; this garment they call a "chamal," and it reaches to the calf of the leg. It is fastened by a wide sash, to the end of which is attached a running knot, called a "mancorna,"

composed of two round stones, weighing about two pounds, and covered with horse-skin. The other cloak, called a "poncho," has an opening half-a-yard long in the centre, through which the head is passed, the folds covering the whole body. Some go with their legs and feet bare; but the greater number wear strong boots made from the leg-skin of oxen and horses, as before described: the curve at the hock joint serves for a heel, and the lower part covers the foot. The nerves are used instead of thread for stitching, and they are thus prepared: the sinews, being drawn out, are exposed to the sun, and when almost dry the women masticate them until the filaments become disunited, as if hackled like flax; when reduced to a pulp they spin it, and produce a thread strong enough to sew large sacks with.

The chamal only is usually worn by men; the other parts of the body being covered with skins: sometimes they carry the poncho, but seldom wear it, except on horseback. They are much attached to horses, sit very gracefully in the saddle, and are extremely dexterous and active in the *manége;* racing, wheeling about, and performing other evolutions with expertness and address. The bridles and harness are like those of the Spaniards; but the Indians place "sudadores" (literally "sweaters") woven, and of beautiful texture, under the saddle, covering the horse from the shoulders to the flank.

The females are excellent equestrians also, being in the habit of taking their commodities on horseback to the markets. They likewise wear two cloaks, either of deep blue or red colour; one, called the "quedeto," is fastened upon the shoulders with pins, and covers the entire figure down to the heels, leaving only the arms bare. Round the waist they wear a ribbon of about a palm or less in width, called a "quepique," secured by a buckle, made of different coloured beads, called "comos:" this is one of the ornaments which they take most pride in displaying. In addition they wear another cloak, or square piece, named an "iquilla," over the shoulders; it is fastened by a bodkin, the head of which is formed of a circle of silver termed a "tupo."

Round the throat are worn necklaces, sometimes consisting of more than twenty strings of "comos," in the form of rosaries, and of different coloured "llancatus," or beads. On the arms they wear bracelets of the same, and likewise round the legs anklets, or "quichiques." For the head they work plaits of beads similar to those upon the wrists; forming a coif, in the shape of a tortoise or turtle shell, called "tapagne," to which is attached a small bell, which tinkles as they walk. From the centre of the tapagne strings of beads hang on each side, and upon the front they embroider a cross of different colours: this last ornament is prized very highly. They use brushes of roots, which might be used for

brooms, to arrange their hair, which they part with their fingers; then putting on the tapagne, and twisting the strings of beads from the top, they tie the hair with them, thus forming a kind of tail reaching to the waist, which is very inconvenient when stooping. Another string of beads, intermingled with small bells, is also hung over the shoulders, the slightest movement causing a tinkling sound; this is considered beautiful, and they consequently move much more frequently than is necessary. From the ears they suspend pieces of silver from two to three inches square, and they wear several rings upon their fingers.

The habitations of these Indians are huts or tents, called toldos, formed of horse-hides sewn together with thread made of sinews; they consist of two pieces of six or eight skins each. In erecting them the women place forked poles in the ground, fixing pieces of cane or wood horizontally across the top, upon which they stretch the hides; sometimes they leave an opening in the roof a quarter of a yard wide for the smoke to escape, through which the rain and cold penetrate in bad weather. Divisions or compartments are made, in proportion to the number of women who may reside in these toldos, by suspending a horseskin from the roof. Their beds are composed of three sheepskins, and the covering or *llycas* is composed of the skins of other animals; the skins are all

smeared with horse-grease, and insufferably fetid. The appearance presented by these habitations is ugly in the extreme, and their interior is also disgustingly filthy and disordered, meat being thrown with wasteful negligence about all parts of the hut; sometimes upon the beds and their clothes, where it is left to putrefy. In fine, they live in a state of abomination scarcely possible to describe or conceive.

The tents, or toldos, are usually erected in groups of three, six, or eight together; being the dwellings of the cacique and his young men. They are generally pitched on the margins of rivers or brooks, near which are always the haciendas, or farm lands.

The Peguenche tribe, to whom the following pages have especial reference, believe in a deity, who created and governs all things; and when suffering any ill, they consider themselves abandoned by him. Guecumbu, an evil spirit, is regarded as the author of all evil, and the cause of all their misfortunes; witches and sorcerers are viewed as his agents, and poisonous herbs are supposed to be created by him. They do not offer any sacrifice, nor use any outward form of religion; justifying themselves by arguing that the Deity should supply their wants as a father; and that therefore it is unnecessary to use supplication or prayer. They consider that the actions of man are free, and, how-

ever bad, cannot be offensive to God. They use divinations, and place much credence in dreams; the howling of dogs is observed as being peculiarly ominous. They believe themselves to be formed of body and soul, the body only being corruptible; and that the soul after death goes to the other side of the sea, where it enjoys eternal life, and all the animals and productions there existing, which are in common.

When an Indian dies, the corpse is placed on the bed, dressed in its best clothes; the friends and relatives assemble and lament most piteously over the deceased, celebrating his bravery, and recounting all his good deeds. At the close of the day a feast is held, and a vigil is kept during the whole night. The following morning the body is taken out of the tent and laid across the best horse of the deceased; then, followed by a large assemblage of people, it is led to the grave of his ancestors. On another horse are placed a bed, and the various articles which are to be deposited in the grave. When the sepulchre is opened, a platform of wood is made, upon which the bed and the corpse are laid; the bridle, saddle, spurs, bolas, and knife of the deceased, being placed close to the hands; also food and pitchers of water. Another platform is then erected over the body, to prevent the pressure of the earth, and upon this is placed a horseskin, the whole being finally covered with earth. The last ceremony is to

kill the horses that have brought the body and bedding to the grave; the mourners then separate.

Should the deceased person have been rich, after the first night's vigil the body is removed outside the tent, and a feast is held, called "voyquecaquiri;" at the close of which, the body is interred with great solemnity. The procession is headed by the old women and girls, whose part is to howl and cry with loud voices, while they extol the bravery and virtues of the departed, and lament the loss sustained by the tribe; they are followed by men carrying liquor and food, and also by droves of cows, sheep, and horses.

On the procession reaching the grave, a large fire is kindled, and animals are killed, sufficient to feast all who are present; the mourners continuing their lamentations during these preparations. When the food is ready the most honoured are served first, each one before eating saying to the corpse, "yaca pai!" at the same time throwing it a piece of meat. In this way, one or two days and nights are spent in eating, drinking, singing, and lamenting; after which the corpse is committed to the grave, as already described. The grief of the relatives of the deceased is sufficiently great to last a long time: even at the end of one or two years, if a person whom she had not seen since the occurrence should call at the hut of the widow, she commences a lamentation, and relates all that passed during the illness, and at the burial of her husband.

The married couples expect to be reunited in a future state of existence, and there continue in connubial bliss. They say that the spirits of their relatives or friends appear in dreams, to predict what is to happen; but these spiritual visitations are made to none but the *ulmenes*, and some few old men and women who have wisdom to give counsel and advice.

In many places, fossil sea-shells and other marine substances are found, and they state that their ancestors told them that the sea once inundated all their lands, but that the hills increased in height also, and their forefathers thus escaped, as the water did not reach them. These articles of belief, it is impossible to make them doubt: they declare themselves to be guided by the sayings of their ancestors, who had no interest in teaching them falsehood.

They divide the year into twelve cuyenes, or months, counting by moons, and characterizing each month thus:—

January ..Gualenquiyen..Hot month.
February ..Ynamquiyen ..Second hot time.
March ....Atenquiyen....Time of pine seed (or acorns).
April.....Unemnimi ....Time of the partridge herb.
May .....Ynamquiyen ..Time in which the herb continues.
June.....Ynee-curiguenu.First time of the black sky.
July .....Llaque-cuye ..Second time of the black sky.
August ....Penquen .....Bad time for old women.
September...Ynan-curiquenuTime of vegetation.
October....Guta-paquin ..Increased vegetation.
November...Guequilqueyen..Time to lop or hew trees.
December..Villa-quiyen ..Time of necessity.

This last month is called "time of necessity," as the stock of grain or other provision is then usually consumed.

Comets they call "cherubé," and consider them to prognosticate great wars when inclining towards their countries; but if inclining to another direction, they are not taken notice of. Eclipses of the sun are called "layante" (the sun is dead), and are thought to prognosticate the speedy death of some great man of their country. Those of the moon, called "layquiyan," denote that some Spaniard of great authority shall die.

The oldest, wisest, richest, and bravest amongst them are styled caciques or guilmenes: a title gained by acts of personal bravery, which are considered more brilliant if the ancestors of the hero were also thus distinguished. Should the son of a cacique not be courageous he is looked upon as despicable; and in such a case the title of cacique is inherited by another Indian, one who is most robust and brave.

The crimes considered most heinous are homicide, adultery, robbery, and witchcraft. Whoever commits a murder must pay compensation to the relatives of the deceased, or is put to death by them. An adulteress forfeits her life; but it is necessary to obtain the consent of her relatives prior to her execution; and if the husband should kill his wife without such consent, he is himself put to death.

A thief is obliged to pay back the value of what he has stolen; but should he not have sufficient means to do so, the sufferer reimburses himself from the property of the delinquent's nearest relative.

Witches and sorcerers are burned to death by the relatives of the bewitched: this is of frequent occurrence, as death is believed to be caused by some evil influence. After the funeral of a great personage, a soothsayer is consulted, who receives a considerable sum to denounce the witch who caused the death; and when she is named, the relatives of the deceased seize her at daylight, kindle a fire in the open plain, and if she refuses to declare her accomplices, she is placed on the burning pile. To escape from this torture, the wretched woman may be induced to name other parties, towards whom they act in the same way, unless they have a considerable portion of goods to satisfy the covetousness of the family. This extreme severity, however, is confined to the Peguencha tribe.

The military government of the Indians is more rational than the civil. Some offence or injury is usually the motive for taking up arms. Upon such occasions the aggrieved party visits all the caciques and makes known to them his complaints; a war council is then summoned, when the oldest of the ulmenes or guilmenes states the wrong suffered by one of the tribe, exaggerating the injury by using the strongest expressions, showing the satisfaction

necessary to compensate it, and concluding by exhorting his countrymen to take up arms. After this all speak freely, in turn, and if the majority should decide for fighting, war is at once determined upon. The tribe is summoned again for the next day, when all the warriors are expected to assemble; each one duly supplied, at his own expense, with victuals, horses, and arms. The aggrieved person then takes the command; unless it be a national war, when that office devolves upon the caciques.

The Indians usually approach the village of their enemies about day-break, and seizing the lances which are always stuck up at the entrances of the huts, they fall upon their unsuspecting victims, who are put to death if they offer resistance; the women, children, and cattle, being carried off as booty to the victors. The plunder thus acquired does not become the common property of the tribe; but each warrior claims the right of retaining that which he has acquired by his own valour. The women form the chief object of their desire: if a woman pleases her captor she becomes his wife, without being obliged to pay any ransom; otherwise he has the privilege of selling her to another, and in the meantime she becomes his slave.

The arms used by the Peguenchas are lances and long knives. The warriors wear helmets made of hardened ox-hide covered with tin, and a cloak of hide reaching to the knee, painted over with hor-

rible-looking figures, intended to strike terror into their enemies. Each warrior selects his best horses and most valuable trappings, under the impression that, if killed, he thus provides necessaries for his future state of existence.

Their doctors are the manchis, or medicine-men, who are skilled in the use of herbs; but various barbarous practices are employed as remedies: it is positively asserted that if a patient suffers from internal pain which cannot be relieved, the side is opened, and a piece cut out of the liver, which is given the patient to eat; and instances are known of the victim surviving this barbarous treatment.

If a succession of remedies be found ineffectual, mysterious ceremonies, called *Molviuntum* and *Marcupiguelem*, are resorted to. Molviuntum is performed by killing a sheep and a colt, which are placed with vessels of chichala (a fermented liquor) under trees close to a hut. The invalid is then carried out and laid on the sunny side of the trees, and the manchi or medicine-man, with the women, commence dancing in a circle round the trees, the animals, and the patient. At the close of a protracted dance, the manchi three times fumigates both the animals and the patient, and then proceeds to suck the diseased part with such force and perseverance as to draw blood very liberally. This exertion, on the part of the manchi, causes him to feel weak and fatigued, and ends by his feigning

madness. The heart of the colt is then taken out and brought to him ; he receives it with great agitation ; and after sucking a mouthful of the blood, heaves the remainder towards the sun. The patient is then anointed all over with the blood of the colt, and the figure of a cross is formed upon the forehead with the blood of the heart. The same ceremony is performed with the sheep. Dancing is again commenced, in which the invalid joins, he being sustained by others to enable him to make some effort. The ceremony is then concluded by the people eating the animals ; the bones, hides, and every morsel left, being carefully collected and hung up on the trees, lest they should be touched by dogs : the remains being considered sacred.

The marcupiguelem is as follows :—Two poles are stuck in the ground, and around them is formed an arbour composed of branches of trees, having an entrance to the west. Into this arbour the patient is brought and laid down, old women standing on either side, and two old men at the head and feet. Six young girls, in their richest attire, are then tied by their hands to the backs of the old women ; and a horse, prepared for the occasion, being killed, the girls are anointed with his blood, the entrails being carefully coiled round the necks of the old women. One man then takes the tail of the horse in his hand, and the other the head; and in this position the whole

party commence dancing, singing, and laughing; in which sports the patient is exhorted to join. After a little while, the heart is extracted from the horse, and the patient is anointed with its blood. At the conclusion of the rites, the remains of the carcass are hung upon trees, being regarded as sacred.

The marriage ceremony is similar to that which is practised by many barbarous races. When a young man desires to obtain a wife, he communicates his wishes to his relatives, in order to obtain their assistance in collecting the amount necessary to satisfy the parents and friends of the bride. Before daybreak, upon the morning of the wedding, the friends of the young man assemble at a place appointed, and send some of their number to the hut of the bride. Upon entering the hut, they at once announce their mission, and with much eloquence eulogize the bridegroom; recounting also the deeds of his ancestors. To this the father of the bride replies by commending the good qualities of his daughter, and then refers them for a final decision to her mother. The mother's consent being obtained, the gifts to be presented in exchange for the girl are arranged: this point is sometimes one of great difficulty, for all her friends must receive a portion of the presents. So soon as this part of the affair is brought to a close, one of the deputation returns to the bridegroom, desiring him and his companions to advance with the gifts; which

usually consist of cattle, wearing-apparel, spurs, and horse-trappings. Eight or ten cloaks are then formed into a seat, and the father of the bridegroom enters the tent, inquiring for the bride. He finds her holding in her right hand a plate, having upon it a green stone called llanca, which she presents to him. She is then introduced to the friends of her future husband, and takes her seat upon the seat of cloaks. An animal, either a horse or an ox, is then killed, the heart and chest of which are parboiled and eaten by the assembly. At the close of this repast, the bride is conducted to the hut of the bridegroom, where feasting and dancing are continued during the day.

Such is the usual marriage ceremony; but should lovers anticipate the opposition of their parents, the girl is frequently carried off by the friends of the young man, with whom she lives in concealment for some days. Afterwards, the relatives of the man proceed to demand her from her parents; making presents, as upon the former occasion, and asking pardon for the violence employed, pleading excessive love as its cause, and declaring the parties already married by mutual consent. On such occasions a reconciliation is easily effected; a marriage-feast is then celebrated, and adequate gifts are presented to the parents and friends of the bride.

Polygamy is permitted; but, in consequence of the expense attendant upon marriage, none but the

rich can avail themselves of this privilege. When an Indian has two or three wives, the first married is endowed with the greatest authority, and governs the establishment. Jealousy often rages amongst the wives, but it soon subsides, in consequence of the perfect indifference with which the husband regards their quarrels. The husband is obliged to pass two nights successively with each wife, a custom of great antiquity, and which admits of no deviation; and the wife whose turn it is to receive her husband is obliged to provide him with food and drink for the time, and to treat him with the greatest affection and respect.

The women spin and weave garments for themselves, their husbands, and children; carry on their shoulders water and firewood; attend to all domestic operations; clean the men's bridles and saddles; and, in fact, are the abject slaves of the men, being compelled to perform every kind of labour, even the most toilsome. This laborious life, however, makes child-bearing easy, for the moment a female is delivered of a child she goes to the river, bathes herself and the infant, and then returns to her domestic occupations, and prepares *chicha* to feast her friends in celebration of the occasion. A small box is then made and lined with sheepskins; and the infant, rolled in flannel, ligatures being bound round its feet and arms, with the view of causing them to grow strong and muscular, is placed in

the box, which the mother is obliged to carry on her back in all her daily occupations, whether on foot or mounted, until the child is able to walk.

The only education the child receives, if a boy, is that of a hunter or warrior; with recitals of the exploits and valour of his ancestors, in order to create in him a like spirit, and to impress upon him the dignity of always speaking and acting with haughtiness. When a parent observes his child to be arrogant orcruel, he encourages his ferocity, saying that these feelings are promises of future greatness. Chastisement is considered as tending to debilitate the mind, and is therefore never resorted to.

The usual food of these Indians is the flesh of horses, of which animals they have large numbers; but they also eat the flesh of such other animals as abound in the country. The general mode of cooking is to roast, or rather warm the meat; which sometimes is parboiled. At the time of slaughtering the animal, the kidney-fat, and the untimely offspring, if any, are eaten raw: the fat is removed from the entrails with the nails, and thus eaten; the blood being used to smear over the face and hands. When the animal is young, its throat is cut, and held in such a way as to bleed internally. The lungs and heart are then extracted; and being filled with coagulated blood, are eaten raw: this is considered a great delicacy. Corn, which is

always procured from the Spanish frontier, is eaten, prepared in different ways. Water is the ordinary beverage; but a liquor is drunk at their feasts made from corn masticated, and placed in jars to ferment. They usually eat three regular meals—at morning, midday, and evening, before dark. Candles are never used; the only artificial light being that emitted from their fires.

Their great feasts consist of various meats and chicha, but the festivity is considered much grander when wine is obtained; and, though ordinarily water-drinkers, they are strongly addicted to intoxication when fermented drink is procurable, frequently passing several days in the most brutal debauchery.

Their musical instruments are limited to a pipe made of cane, and a sort of drum or tambourine, similar to that used by the manchis, to the sound of which they dance. At festivals, the male dancers are naked, with the exception of a kirtle of leather; their faces, legs, and body, being painted with various colours, and ostrich feathers stuck in their heads; while strings of little bells are hung upon the neck and shoulders. The dancers form a circle round a fire, and move their feet with great rapidity, making a variety of bodily contortions. These dances frequently last for three days in succession. The women never mingle in the dance with men, but dance apart, decked in their

richest attire. Horse-racing is another favourite amusement; they are also fond of card-playing; but their most general and favourite sport is hurling, which they practise in precisely the same way as a hurling-match is played in Ireland.

CHAPTER VI.

Kindness of Colonel Echavaria—Store for supplying Indians—Methods of threshing corn—A flat and dreary waste—Low tone of sexual morality—Deadening influence of vast plains upon the dwellers in them—Lazoing a cow for supper—Keen scent of carrion birds—Bivouac on the plains—Mode of roasting beef on the Pampas—Sleeping in the open air—Vague directions for travellers on the plains—A night's "lodging on the cold ground"—Estancia of Dr. Dick—Value of land—Tidings of a tiger—Troops of wild horses, but none for a traveller to ride—Military exactions and arbitrary tyranny—Negro hospitality and kindness—Sleeping among rats—Estancia and family of the widow Burns—Horses beat to a stand-still—A generous herdsman—Plains covered with sheep—Mr. Handy, an Irish flock-owner—Buying sheep at three-halfpence each—Feeding pigs with mutton—Crossing a swollen river—Review of the journey.

I LEFT the house of Colonel Echavaria, impressed with a lively sense of the services he had rendered me. I had called on him a total stranger, without introduction, and at the time of a political crisis; yet he at once made his house my own, and to facilitate my object of obtaining authentic information respecting the Indian tribes, accompanied me in all

my rides amongst the toldos; and he having had many years of intercourse with them, I enjoyed every advantage that could be desired in this respect.

In the afternoon of the day of my departure, I reached a chacara or farmhouse, where we stopped for the night. Our host kept a store, well filled with every description of goods suited to the population, and during the whole evening, up to a late hour at night, the Indians were coming in to beg, buy, or barter; spirits being in great demand. The Indians were all mounted; but sometimes two women, and occasionally even three, rode on one horse.

Maize is planted here, and also wheat; but for the want of fences it is necessary to watch the fields day and night, to keep off the cattle. If the time wasted by the watchmen were employed in making a ditch, they would soon have a good fence. The eastern mode of threshing corn—treading it out by cattle—is adopted throughout the interior of this province; but horses are employed instead of oxen. The sheaves are placed on a hide, and drawn along the ground by a horse to the threshing-floor, a circular spot of hard ground, from which the surface is removed to a depth of twelve or fourteen inches. Around this circle is constructed a temporary fence, inside which the sheaves of corn are thrown; young active horses, unshod, are then driven in, and kept galloping round, as in a circus, until the grains of wheat are trampled out; then the straw is gathered

up, and the grain removed to make room for more sheaves.

We had an armadillo for supper, and as soon as we thought ourselves free from the visits of the Indians, we swept the floor of the store, and made our beds. Next morning was foggy, and we were concerned at finding one of our horses lame, and our pack-horse very tired; we started, therefore, with the intention of travelling very slowly. The Commandante had most kindly ordered us a guide, which saved our taking a circuitous course of several leagues. Our way lay across a neck of land which in winter is covered with water, and is of so little value as to be unsaleable. Being covered with tall, coarse grass, lions and tigers occasionally take shelter here; especially as it is full of wild cattle.

Before entering on this waste we called at a rancho to obtain a fresh horse for our guide. It was inhabited by a good-looking Indian woman, and a native man. As we stopped to take maté, a young Indian girl joined us; she had a very mild and interesting countenance, and would have been considered pretty even in England. Along the frontier, the tone of sexual morality is low; polygamy is universal amongst the Indians, and their practice of buying wives leads to dissolute habits: unhappily their example is too frequently followed by their Christian neighbours. A troop of about thirty waggons belonging to govern-

ment passed us, drawn by bullocks, and laden with stores for the Indian settlement.

After travelling for some time through this wild, I was particularly struck with its desolate solitude; not a hill nor a tree, neither rock nor river, varied the dead, dreary level; and no human habitation was visible for miles. I do not think the inhabitants of vast plains can be either poets or patriots; they are not surrounded with any of the elements that kindle the fancy of the one, or inspire the feelings of the other. Woods and groves may appear to the imagination peopled with fawns and fairies; streams and fountains suggest ideas of nymphs and naiads; while cultivated fields and verdant meadows, alternated with hill and valley, present to the mind charming pictures of rural bliss. But such delightful associations can only be awakened by the varied beauties of bounteous nature; and where such attractions do not exist, the mind and the feelings lack the food which nourish poetic fancy and patriotic fervour. The inhabitants of a plain may love each other, of course, and feel themselves linked with the human race; but they cannot love with ardour that country where those beauties that enliven the fancy and warm the soul, are either altogether absent or "few and far between."

We found it difficult at times to make our way through the tall grass, especially as in some places the ground was soft from the rain; our horses were therefore very much fatigued, and towards the

Ford & West. lithog

Hunting a wild cow.

Published by Smith, Elder & C.

afternoon, the pack-horse being unable to travel, we transferred his load to another. No habitation being in sight, we made up our minds to pass the night on the open plain; and not being prepared for such an adventure, our first thought was what we should find to eat. We were all very hungry, maté being stimulating but not nourishing drink: none of us but myself had broken our fast that day; and I had only eaten a morsel of bread. Partridges there were none, as they always avoid swampy grounds; and we might waste daylight in searching for an armadillo in such long grass: the usual expedient in such cases at once suggested itself, and accordingly we prepared to procure some beef for our supper by lazoing a cow.

Two of our companions soon got ready their lazoes, and one mounting his horse, rode at full speed towards a large herd of cattle about half a league distant. The cattle were alarmed, and we observed the wholeherd in motion, while their pursuer with difficulty gained upon them by reason of the tall grass; at length his horse gradually neared some of the stragglers, which he passed, and dashed into the middle of the herd, with the design of turning them. This manœuvre rendered the chase very exciting. One-half the herd continued their onward course, until they were out of sight, while the others took a sweep in our direction: we watched every movement of the horseman with lively interest. Don

Pepe had by this time reached the hunting-ground, and meeting the herd coming down at a furious pace, he singled out one animal as his victim. This was a young black cow, about two years old, and very fleet, which ran in a straight line for some distance, leaving the first horseman far behind her: but Don Pepe having joined in the chase at a later period, and with a fresh horse, had the advantage; and luckily he was in a position to cross her path obliquely. We saw him preparing the fatal coil, and spurring his horse to the top of its speed; onward he flew, cutting the air with the whirling motion of his lazo, until he got the beast within its range, when he threw the fatal noose with a sure aim; his horse halted to resist the shock of the struggling captive, which was at once brought to the ground, where the long grass hid her from our view. Presently the other horseman reached the spot, when, flinging himself from the saddle, he drew his knife, and the struggles of the animal quickly ceased.

My first inquiry was touching the ownership of the beast: "Has she a mark?" "Yes." "Then she belongs to some one; and in plain, honest speech, we have stolen a cow: for which offence, if prosecuted, we are liable to a severe penalty." Such acts, however, are so common on the frontier, particularly when travellers are benighted, or unable to obtain other food, that the morality of the deed is

measured by a very different scale to cattle-lifting in Britain: besides the difference in the value of the animal. A black cow, I found, had been chosen, that being the colour most used by the natives when they require the hide for equestrian purposes.

While standing by the side of the carcass, before the hide was stripped off, I was astonished, on looking round, to observe that the caranchias, and other carrion hawks, were flocking towards us from all points of the compass, and at such distances that I could not even guess how far the smell must have extended: as far, however, as the eye could reach, the birds might be seen on the wing approaching the feast. The rapid diffusion through the atmosphere of exhalations from the blood and animal matter, as well as the keen sense of smelling in these birds, were strikingly manifested upon this occasion. Although I could not ascertain the distance whence these hawks came, it appeared to me that the odours from the carcass must have been borne on the air as rapidly as sound travels.

Having cut off the tenderest part of the beef, we left the carcass to the birds, and mounting, went in search of water. We soon found a little fairy lake, its edge fringed with bulrushes, and its surface dotted with widgeon and wild ducks; here we agreed to encamp for the night. Relieving our pack-horse of his load, we collected bones, thistles, and sticks to kindle a fire; and soon, with the aid of

fat from the cow, we had a fire that would have roasted an ox. We then boiled some water, and took maté, while our beef was roasting in the way termed "carneconcuero," that is, with the skin on; which mode retains the juice and gravy, making the food very delicious. The sun had set long before we finished our repast, but the blaze of our fire afforded sufficient light.

After supper and social chat, enlivened with songs, we spread our saddles on a bank of rushes, and, impressed with the glorious majesty of the canopy of heaven above us, we were soon in the land of dreams. I awoke during the night, and beheld the moon shining forth with a softened splendour, while a stillness so absolute that the pulse of nature seemed to have ceased to beat, reigned around. A sense of inexpressible grandeur and solemnity pervaded my mind: the earth, the sun, and the moon, for the first time in my life, impressed me with a sense of the eternity of their companionship; and I felt humbled to think how often man, forgetful of his immortal destiny, closes his perceptions to all that is most sublime around and above him, and finds satisfaction in idle and frivolous vanities.

On waking in the morning, everything was steeped in a heavy dew; we shook the wet off our wrappings, laved in the lake, rekindled our fire, the warmth of which was very grateful, and enjoyed a repast of cold meat and maté, before we mounted.

A dense fog rendered it difficult to find our way, but our guide took us a more direct course than we could have expected under the circumstances; although we went some miles out of our way. About noon, we reached an estancia called "the 9th of July," in commemoration of a victory. The owner and his kind lady set before us an excellent déjeuné, with coffee, &c., served in European fashion; and we rested here for a short time.

Before resuming our journey, having inquired the way to an estancia called the Tres Bonetes, belonging to Dr. Dick, a Scotch gentleman, whom I desired to visit, I mounted my best and favourite horse, and rode rapidly forward, leaving my companions to follow leisurely with our tired tropilla. Generally speaking, the natives take very little trouble to put a traveller on the right road, and (without intending it I believe) they are just as likely to direct him wrong as right: they think it quite enough to point with their hand, or describe a tree by which he is to pass; but the luckless traveller who, when he gallops off in the direction they point out, fancies he sees the way before him, will only follow a "Will o' the Wisp." Such was my fate to-day. I had received what seemed to be accurate directions, but went some leagues out of my way; and many were my inquiries and turnings before I reached the Tres Bonetes. Frequently I looked wistfully towards the setting sun, and as often did I fear that the grassy

plain would be my bed for the night: sublime as is the starry vault of heaven, its canopy is too vast to afford a comfortable shelter for a solitary traveller. However, at last, after a most vexatious ride—vexatious, because my poor horse was hardly able to make his way through grass which was sometimes higher than the skirts of my saddle—I reached the house of Dr. Dick. Here I fully expected to find my companions; but they were not there, nor did they arrive until the next morning.

Their journey, also, had proved a troublesome adventure: their horses were so tired, and the grass so tall and strong, that it was impossible to travel speedily; and though they got sight of the house before sunset, and made a great effort to reach it, darkness at length overtook them, and again they had to sleep on the grass. Unfortunately, they did not halt in time; and before they could collect materials for their fire, everything was so wet with the heavy dew that nothing would burn: their bivouac was therefore most unpleasant. Having only a little of the cold beef saved from the previous night, and nothing to drink, they were also without fire; but being extremely fatigued, all were soon asleep, and awoke refreshed, though suffering from thirst and cold.

Dr. Dick's estancia, Tres Bonetes, covers an extent of eighteen leagues square, of prime land, well watered; and it was computed to contain twenty-

five thousand head of cattle, besides sheep, and between two and three thousand mares and potros (unbroken horses); but, for the want of herdsmen, both cattle and horses are so wild that, when any are sold, the charge for wages, in collecting them together and delivering them to the purchaser, amounts to twelve or fifteen per cent. on their first cost.

The value of land in this neighbourhood is about 20,000 dollars per league square. Along the adjoining frontier, large sales of government land have been made at the public price, which is 4,000 dollars per league, equal to £50 sterling, at threepence exchange; being exactly two-pence per English acre, for the fee simple of land within fifty leagues of Buenos Ayres: but before the purchaser can be put in possession, the expenses direct and indirect amount to as much more.

While we were at breakfast, one of Dr. Dick's herdsmen announced that a tiger had killed a cow the night before; and we discovered that the occurrence took place close to the spot where Don José and Don Pepe had so recently rested for the night: they had had a narrow escape, indeed. Preparations were at once made to give chase to the tiger, in which I was anxious to join; but not having a horse fit for such a purpose, I was content to offer twenty shillings for the skin of the wild beast if he were captured: the hunters, however, did not succeed in discovering his haunt.

Having now travelled nearly five hundred miles, the horses were quite disabled; and as I intended to continue along the frontier for two hundred miles northward, it became absolutely necessary to obtain another tropilla. Although the plains were covered with mares and potros, I was, however, unable to obtain any sufficiently tame for my purpose; unless at a great sacrifice of time. As well might the owners of some of the estancias around here boast that they had several thousand wild pigeons, and that when a few were caught they would have a pie for dinner, as to boast of having so many thousand horses, when none of them were available for any purpose. After making inquiries in all directions, I found it impossible to procure a tropilla, and was therefore very reluctantly compelled to abandon my design and turn my face more directly towards Buenos Ayres. Here was I surrounded by troops of horses running wild, and obliged to turn back for want of one or two to pursue my journey: thus for want of labour the bounty of nature is almost left to waste in this country.

Trained or broken-in horses are scarce, because they are considered munitions of war. Whenever the government requires horses for an army, notice is given to the local authorities, and the commandant of the district sends a few soldiers to the different estancias, with directions to take whatever are required. These exactions have been so frequent

of late years, that few owners will now be at the trouble and expense of taming horses; fearing they may be only doing so for the service of government.

The evil arising out of this practice is also augmented by the power which the government exercises of *pressing* men for the army; as, whenever *auxilias* are required, the officers visit the different establishments, and take as many men as they desire from their employments. Thus the very fountain of national industry is dried up; and the most prosperous establishment may at any moment be paralyzed by a visit from the Commandante requiring men and horses. The cattle necessary to feed an army are obtained in like manner; but this is a less grievous exaction. This barbarous mode of taxation cannot be abolished too soon: it is, of course, loudly complained of by all residents, both native and foreign; being not only tyrannical, and destructive of industry, but unjustly levied; for the power exercised by the Commandante is so arbitrary, he can tax whom he pleases, and spare his friends altogether: hence the levies are so unequal, that some *never* contribute any portion, while others are heavily oppressed. General Rosas was not aware of the extent of injustice thus inflicted on the people by this mode of taxation, and when well-founded complaints were made of partial levies, he invariably granted redress; but it is usually thought more prudent to submit in silence,

than incur the displeasure of the local authorities, and their host of subordinates. That system, however, must be vicious and ruinous which commits the happiness or prosperity of the citizen to the arbitrary will and irresponsible power of an inferior magistrate.

On leaving Dr. Dick's estancia it seemed doubtful if we should reach Buenos Ayres, fifty leagues distant, even by short and slow journeys, so jaded were our horses; we had no alternative, however, but to make the attempt, trusting to be able to get on towards the city sufficiently near to buy or hire fresh horses to finish the journey. We therefore proceeded leisurely, intending to stop for the night at the Toldos estancia, belonging to Mrs. Miller; but finding that the house was a league out of our way, we halted at the hut of one of her herdsmen.

It was occupied by a negro man and a mulatto woman, who at once, and in the kindest manner possible, prepared us a supper of roast lamb and boiled mutton, with broth; the latter we sipped out of spoons made from the ends of cow's horns—simple and serviceable. Hungry as I was, I did not enjoy this repast, for these good creatures would not touch a morsel until we had finished; and then, as if considering themselves unworthy to eat in our presence, they removed their share into a separate room. This was the first negro I had seen on an estancia. Indians along the frontier sometimes take care of

sheep—an employment that suits their lazy habits; but I am told that the women are not fit for domestic industry: it matters not how well they may be treated, they prefer the unrestrained freedom of their native wilds.

After supper we swept the floor with a broom of ostrich feathers, and then made our beds. Our hostess, in her desire to minister to our comfort, pressed me to use a clean pair of sheets; but there being no bed or mattrass, I declined spreading them upon a floor of mud, which was ill swept: I would not shock her feelings by assigning the reason, for I felt grateful for her care and attention. This was another instance, in addition to many that I had experienced, of the fact that kindness is the predominant feeling in woman's nature.

I unfortunately arranged my sleeping place over a burrow of rats, and before I had time to adjust the covering of cloaks, I heard them squealing and scuffling under me; and they soon commenced walking over me, astonished no doubt at such a strange bedfellow. I amused myself for a while with kicking them off, not unwilling that some of them should go over to Don José, who was snoring in an opposite corner; and when tired of this pastime, I attempted to cover up my head, leaving only the smallest space open, through which to breathe: for I feared to leave even the tip of my nose exposed, lest it should be nibbled at. However, I soon forgot the

rats in a sound sleep, and on awaking found I had not furnished them with the smallest meal.

Next morning we were early on the road, and about noon reached an estancia where we had an excellent breakfast. Mrs. Burns, the proprietor, is an English woman, and a widow, and an honour to her sex and country. She has acquired a large property by thrift and industry, and now by her ability and application she manages the whole establishment herself, and increases her possessions. Around her dwelling were to be seen substantial out-buildings, and every evidence of care and industry. She has a large family, and employs a proper person to instruct all her children, nephews, nieces, and dependents.

Our horses being rested, the hostess sent one of her herdsmen to show us a ford across a stream. This man at once predicted that our pack-horse would be knocked up before the end of the day; but we went on hoping against hope, until his prediction was verified within an hour, for the poor beast literally stood still, unable to move another step. It seemed inevitable that we must abandon him; but seeing approaching a man driving cattle to water, we placed the horse under his protection, and continued our journey. Before we completed half a league, one of my riding-horses, which had been too feeble to carry a saddle for some days, also came to a stand-still, unable to proceed. In this predicament we sat down on the grass to hold a coun-

cil, Indian fashion; but before we had come to any conclusion we heard the tramp of horses' feet, and saw a man coming towards us, who proved to be the guide whom Mrs. Burns had sent with us in the morning. Upon coming up to us, he said—"When I went home to my rancho, I thought of you: I knew that your horses would tire; and I told my wife, who had sorrow for you. Then I said I would follow you with my own horse; and here he is." With these few and simple words, he presented us with a strong, fresh horse. This most unexpected and spontaneous act of generosity was a welcome relief; and it enabled us at once to continue our journey. The herdsman would accept nothing but thanks in return; and, morever, took charge of our two disabled horses.

We stopped for the night at the estancia of a native gentleman, where we were hospitably entertained; the ladies offering us maté and other refreshments, which were followed by an abundant and delicate supper, and the luxury of an excellent bed.

Next morning a guide was sent to show us the ford over a little stream; such precautions being necessary in consequence of the late rains. The fog now became so dense, that for many hours we were uncertain as to our way, but we trusted to our compass, and kept on in the right direction; perceiving that we were approaching the town, by the flocks of sheep which every hour appeared

more numerous, until, finally, we reached the plains chiefly devoted to sheep. For twenty leagues around the city of Buenos Ayres, the estancias, or cattle farms, ought rather to be called sheep farms. The majority of the owners are British subjects.

Early in the evening we reached the house of my friend Mr. Flint, an American gentleman, where we were gladly welcomed. Upon going round his grounds to see the improvements, we were shown a flock of sheep which he had lately purchased in the south at three shillings per dozen. We had one roasted for dinner, which was both fat and sweet. The idea of a family feasting upon a fat sheep costing only threepence, and this within forty miles of the city of Buenos Ayres, did appear to me an extraordinary and suggestive fact.

Our travelling party here broke up. Don Pepe, who had contributed so much to my comfort, as well as to the complete success of my journey, and to whose kindness I feel much indebted, crossed the plains with the tropilla to his home; while Don José, my friend Mr. Joseph Mears, and myself, continued an onward direction towards the city. On our way we stopped for the night at the house of Mr. M. Handy, who is from the south of Ireland, and has acquired celebrity amongst his countrymen by the versatility of his talents; being known to fame by various titles: sometimes he is plain Mr. Handy, at other

times Irish Mike, and not unfrequently the " Duke of Leinster." He is not only good-tempered and facetious, but an intelligent and prosperous man; the possessor of a splendid sheep-farm, with a good house surrounded by plantations, a handsome wife, and a fine family of children, who have a tutor to instruct them. Surrounded by such elements of happiness, could he be otherwise than contented?

He had lately been in the south buying sheep, where, by good management and a little patience, he obtained eight thousand at *eighteenpence per dozen!*—four copper rials each. His homeward journey of about two hundred miles, with his purchase, was accomplished in thirty days; during which he consumed and lost on the way less than a hundred of that enormous flock. As soon as the sheep became fattened on his own lands, he killed about a thousand, sold the fleeces at five shillings and threepence per dozen, and with the mutton he fed a herd of swine. Mentioning this fact to a large party of Europeans at the dinner-table of Lord Howden, when in Buenos Ayres, my statement was received with a murmur of scepticism; but I offered to accompany the incredulous to the pastures, where the remainder of the sheep were then feeding.

At the house of Mr. Handy I met with the Rev. Mr. Fahy, an Irish Roman Catholic priest, who was on one of his pastoral visitations; and in

whose society we passed an agreeable evening. Mr. Fahy is indispensable to his countrymen here: not only does he affectionately discharge his ministerial duties, but gives his flock the full benefit of his experience and advice in temporal matters.

The morning when we prepared to start was very wet, and our kind friends pressed us to remain another day, as the Boca River would be dangerous to cross, the whole of the low lands being now covered with water; but since that danger would only be increased by the rain, we resolved to proceed. When we reached the river, it was so swollen that it did indeed look formidable. Don José, nevertheless, dashed in first; and when he was safe on the other side, I secured my papers around my body to keep them safe and dry, and between swimming and plunging, my horse and myself got safely over. In a few hours we reached Buenos Ayres.

In reviewing the incidents and adventures of this journey of 600 or 700 miles, feelings of thankfulness for preservation from danger were mingled with a grateful sense of the kindness and hospitality so spontaneously and generously afforded me throughout. The entertainment and accommodation to our party had not cost me a single dollar; indeed, the offer of payment would have been regarded as an insult, even by the poorest among the peasantry. I was a total stranger—having pur-

posely avoided taking more than a single letter of introduction—and a foreigner, and known only to one or two residents; yet, I had been for many weeks journeying over vast plains and thinly-peopled districts, and had met with nothing but kindness at the hands of all classes and races, from the most wretched Indian and the poorest native herdsman, to the Commandante and the wealthy estanciero. Feeling it a duty to express publicly my grateful sense of the hospitality shown me—though mine, of course, is not a singular case—I addressed a letter to the *British Packet*, acknowledging my obligations; and also calling attention to the peaceful prosperity of the British settlers, and the favourable prospects for emigrants, as well as to the want of labour in the country, and the consequent waste of property and absence of improvement.

CHAPTER VII.

Results of observation—The Gaucho, Peon, or peasant, his character and habits of life—Two classes of land-owners; civilized and uncivilized—A contrast—Transition state of national habits—Absence of a middle class—Evils arising from want of labourers—Fertile country and scanty population—Superabundance of animals valueless to the owners—Inconveniences of travelling—Cleanliness impossible—Dirty habits of the people—Good teeth indispensable—Inconvenience of a late breakfast—Fuel an expensive luxury—System of police—The Bizcacha, and its habits—Owls and ostriches—Habits of the ostrich—Venomous spiders and toads—The Becho Colorado.

I MAY here be permitted to sum up the results of my observations of the people and their habits, the country and its natural productions, and the state of law and society, during this journey. And first of the inhabitants of the Buenos Ayres provinces.

The term Gaucho is one offensive to the mass of the people, being understood to mean a person who has no local habitation, but lives a nomadic life; therefore in speaking of the poorer classes I avoid that term. The native Peon, or labourer, possesses feelings and

habits which have grown upon him owing to the state of the country, and I confine my view of him solely to his capabilities for industry and domestic happiness—the foundations of national wealth and virtue; avoiding investigation into the causes of his present state, as it is sufficient for my purpose to state facts.

The native peasant lives in a hut or rancho, built, as already stated, with mud, stakes, and thatch. It usually contains two apartments; one called the cook-house—the furniture of which, and mode of cooking, have already been described—the other used for sleeping apartment: the latter contains perhaps two or three chairs, and a bedstead or *catre;* but the poorer class are content with a platform of sticks, boards, hide-ropes, or hides, supported on four stakes driven into the ground; on this sheep-skins are laid, the covering being a blanket or quilt: sometimes a very clean coverlet may be seen. His employments are limited to horses and the herding of cattle, and such as are pursued on horseback: he will not do anything on foot. He will never even attempt to plough, reap, make ditches, keep a garden, repair his house, or attend to the various occupations of a cottager. He has a great dread of aquatic employments, and also dislikes mechanic arts; and neither fishing nor shooting have any attractions for him. He cannot be depended on to do anything within a limited period; he has no idea of the value of time; he counts by days, never by hours, much

less by minutes; he is a procrastinator, and the life of a procrastinator is an *everlasting to-morrow.* His habits are migratory: wherever he goes the hospitality of the country feeds him; and when travelling, he finds sleep in the open air quite as agreeable as in the house: except in winter. The active portion of his life is spent on horseback; and if occasionally employed on foot it is in killing animals, drying hides, or repairing his horse-gear. When idle, he is either sipping maté or smoking cigars. The poor women are employed in cooking and washing the clothes; but they do nothing more than is absolutely necessary to maintain existence.

Their mode of life varies but little, and one day's existence is like another. At sunrise the husband takes maté and smokes cigars; then mounts his horse and remains out with the cattle until ten or eleven; when he returns home his wife has beef, mutton, or lamb, roasted for breakfast; after which he loiters about the house and takes a siesta till the afternoon, when he again mounts his horse and visits his charge. At sunset his work is over, and he returns to supper, which consists of meat, with the addition of broth, or perhaps a pumpkin. Generally speaking they dislike vegetables, and bread or biscuit are luxuries rarely enjoyed. Their chief amusement is card-playing, and they are confirmed gamblers.

Owners of land may be divided into two classes:

those desirous of adopting European habits, and those who prefer their own. The latter class live precisely in the same manner as the labourer does: although the master may be the owner of one or more leagues of land, he is in habit and feeling a counterpart of his herdsman; the only striking difference is that one has more money to gamble, and is better mounted than the other. Those desirous of becoming European in their habits—and they form a large and increasing section—are such as from choice, or accident, have come in contact with foreigners at Buenos Ayres. They return to the country with a desire to improve their properties, and, as far as practicable, adopt the comforts of civilized life.

To illustrate this, I may mention that I once visited a rich man who, to use his own phrase, "lived in a natural state;" and truly natural it was. His costume was that of the Gaucho. The bedroom had not been cleaned for perhaps half a year; under my bed a favourite game-cock was tied by the leg, that he might be at hand to amuse his master; spurs, stirrups, and other equestrian equipments, of silver, hung round the walls; our food consisted of beef, and beef only, without either salt, bread, biscuit or vegetable of any sort; water was our drink, and the floor was our table. Not far from this man's residence, I visited another native who was not wealthier than the other, but was desirous of being civilized; and we were refreshed by the appearance of a clean, well-

furnished house, dinners nicely served, good wines, fruits, and other luxuries. This man adopted European industry, with liberal outlay, and became rich; the other retained primitive habits of idleness, confined his wants to those of nature, and lived in a state of comparative barbarism.

It will thus be seen that the country is in a transition state, and that native usages must eventually give place to those of a superior character. Already the European costume is becoming very general, and wherever it is seen in the plains, worn by a native, it at once indicates the change in his ideas. No respectable foreigner should ever think of assuming the native costume; the better class of natives do not take as a compliment his doing so: quite the contrary. There is as yet no middle class; the owners of land feeding immense flocks and herds form one class, their herdsmen and shepherds form another: but immigrants are beginning to form an intermediate class of small flock-holders, answering to our English yeomen.

In the progress of society, there are four clearly defined stages through which men appear successively to pass; the first is that of hunters, next that of pastoral industry, then of agriculture, and lastly of commerce. The Spanish Americans of these provinces are in the second stage; for although the commerce of the River Plate is very considerable, it is solely conducted by foreigners.

There is not at present much motive for industry in these provinces, there being no labourers to enable an enterprising capitalist to carry out a continuous plan of operations on a large scale. Should a man buy land for a sheep farm and obtain flocks of sheep, two sources of profit are open to him; one derived from the wool, the other from the increase of the flock. Sheep, above all other animals, require attention; particularly if the owner be anxious (as all owners must be) to have his flocks increase; but, from the want of shepherds, this is often impossible: hence, in bad weather, the sheep scatter, and the lambs perish. The other source of revenue is from the wool. A sheep farmer, finding it impossible to attend to the lambs and ewes, so as to preserve the increase, takes care of the flock: which may be done without much labour. Some have no greater number of sheep now than they had three years ago; but they have improved the wool so much that a shearing worth only twopence per pound formerly, is now worth tenpence per pound. The management of an estancia, or cattle farm, is also attended with very considerable loss and annoyance, in consequence of the want of herdsmen. The climate is so extremely mild, and the soil so fertile, that both sheep and cattle increase amazingly fast; but as the labouring population does not keep pace with the demand for labour, it is but little satisfaction to a capitalist to know that his flocks are fruitful, while the

lambs are left to perish ; or that his herds increase in number, when they run wild.

In this journey I traversed a circle of between six and seven hundred miles ; but had I kept along the shores of the Atlantic until I reached the southern estancias, about Quequeen, and then crossed over westward to the Indian frontier, and northward to the boundary of Santa Fé, I should have made a circuit of about two thousand miles. The entire area of that circle is thinly covered with sheep, cattle, and horses; and has no greater population than perhaps one soul to every square league. There are no hills, except at Tandil: nor is there any stream that deserves to be called a river: neither are trees or stone to be met with.

The first business of a settler is to build, and plant trees round his dwelling: when these grow, he may begin other improvements. I visited families whose cows might be counted by hundreds or even thousands, yet they had neither milk nor butter; they possessed horses innumerable, but a tame one was not to be had. The soil is good for agriculture, yet flour is either imported from the United States, or obtained from the northern provinces; and its price is enhanced by the cost of land-carriage several hundred miles.

The inconveniences of such a journey are not great, provided the traveller possesses bodily strength to endure the fatigue of continuous and violent exercise ; but the impossibility of preserving per-

sonal cleanliness is a great annoyance. I was astonished beyond measure when I saw that respectable families seldom indulged themselves by washing their hands and faces. Bathing is almost unknown: no preparation is made for such comforts, even amongst the wealthy. I felt almost ashamed to ask for water to wash in the morning; and when amongst the poor, I was in absolute misery, and glad to have an opportunity of scraping the grease from my hands with a knife; using grass, weeds, or house-thatch, to complete the cleansing. Upon this point, British subjects in the campo might take a gentle hint; as soap is not expensive, and water can be procured without difficulty.

I would seriously warn any person with bad teeth, not to attempt a journey through the Provinces; for, owing to the custom of roasting beef immediately after the animal is killed, and the fact that the natives throw away the tender and fleshy parts, preferring only such parts as are tough, their meat is anything but edible; and as beef is almost the only food in the Pampas, any one who has not strong teeth must often suffer from hunger, unless he carries a sufficient quantity of bread or biscuit with him. Though my teeth are sound and good, yet at the end of a month, my gums were so sore with the severe duty of masticating tough beef, that I could not venture to touch their "matambres" or "asados;" and unless I obtained a partridge, an

armadillo, or some lamb, I must have often remained supperless.

Another privation is the want of breakfast in the morning: as the family fast till about eleven o'clock, taking only a cup of maté, the traveller must start without food, and trust to chance for the means of breaking his fast; for, no charge whatever being made for native hospitality, the guest is expected to conform to the established usages.

Were it not that the climate is so mild, a residence in the province during the winter would be impracticable for want of fire, there being no timber; and the cartage on fuel of any description renders it an expensive luxury: but the short period of extreme cold is passed over tolerably well; although the fat, bones, and other substitutes for coals and wood, are at best disagreeable.

The lives and property of the keepers of stores, or public-houses, in places far remote from other dwellings, seem to be unprotected; and I was particularly struck with the confidence with which the dealers lived in isolated dwellings, at the mercy of robbers or marauders. I have been assured that such was not the case before the ascendancy of General Rosas; but it being well known that, owing to the system of police established under his government, all, whether rich or poor, who were implicated in the violation of the established laws of the country were sure to suffer the extreme

penalty of their crimes, robbery and outrage are almost unknown.

The bizcacha, an animal with long bushy tail, somewhat resembling a squirrel, and twice the size of a rabbit, is so exceedingly numerous, particularly within a range of twenty leagues of the city, that the frequency of their burrows compels the traveller to be on his guard at night, otherwise the legs of his horse may be broken in their holes. These animals are gregarious in their habits, and burrow in the same manner as rabbits; they seldom appear during the day, but at sunset come out to feed. I have frequently watched them, as they are very tame, and not conscious of danger: they raised themselves on their haunches, quietly watching me, perhaps with as much curiosity as I watched them. Grass appears to be their only food; indeed, none other is within their reach, especially as they do not wander far. I have not heard of their being eaten, although they are clean-feeding creatures, and their flesh when cooked is white and tender. These animals have one very singular habit: whatever hard substance they find around their feeding-ground, they carry to the mouth of their burrows, whether it be a stone, thistle-stalk, stick, or bone; for what purpose I am unable to conjecture, as, the rubbish being placed over the mouth of the burrow, but in no way serving for protection, it cannot be for defence: doubtless, this

instinct was implanted in the creature for some useful purpose, although I have not been able to discover it.

Small and pretty owls, remarkable for their tameness, are the inseparable companions of the bizcachas; and during the day, but more especially towards the afternoon, they are to be seen perched on the ground close to the burrow; if disturbed, they only fly to a short distance, or to some neighbouring burrow. These birds have the power of turning their heads so completely round, that when they look backwards their bills appear to be in a line with their tail: the neck seems as if it moved on a swivel, and they twist it round as if it were a matter of indifference whether their eyes looked before or behind them.

Ostriches are numerous, but very shy as well as fleet. They usually feed on grass, roots, and other vegetable growths: whether there be any truth in the wonderful power of digestion ascribed to them I know not.

Hunting ostriches is a favourite sport. When a hunting-party is formed, it is customary to move in a circular form, gradually closing in upon the birds until they become alarmed, and seek for safety in flight; the hunters then give chase, and when within proper distance throw the bolas at their legs, and so bring them to the ground. The movement of the birds when they first start is peculiarly awkward:

they appear to use their wings in the way that men use their arms in pedestrian exercises. It is said they prefer running against the wind; but of this I have not been able to judge, for they have escaped from us in every direction. They make a deep-toned, hissing noise, which may be heard at some distance; and the cry of the young is extremely melancholy. The male is distinguished from the female by the size of his head, and the darkness of his colour.

In the spring months the male bird takes under his care from four to eight hens, who depend upon his courage and ability to preserve them from the encroachments of his competitors. All the hens deposit their eggs in the same nest, the number varying from twenty to fifty: I have found as many as forty-five eggs in one nest. The act of incubation is chiefly performed by the male. I am disposed to think that the solitary egg so frequently met with on the plains, is deposited by hens not permanently domiciled. Some eggs are allowed to remain outside the nest, and these are broken by the parent when the young are hatched, in order to attract the flies, upon which the chickens feed during the first few days. The only parts of the ostrich eaten are the wings, and the fat on the back.

As regards venomous reptiles, I have made much inquiry, but found the province comparatively free

from them; unless, perhaps, in the south. There are snakes; but, generally speaking, their bite only produces a high degree of inflammation. The black spider, however, is exceedingly venomous; and its bite, if the wound be neglected, has been known to prove fatal. The escuerzo, a venomous species of toad, is also dangerous; its bite is fatal if an antidote be not immediately applied. The Becho Colorado, a minute red insect, scarcely visible to the naked eye, is terribly annoying; it is generated in the grass during the heat of summer, and penetrates the skin, producing a very troublesome irritation and swelling. Ladies walking in the grass in summer, are sure to suffer from its attacks.

Besides these there is a variety of insects whose sting will produce inflammation, but very rarely any fatal consequences; and generally speaking there is no great cause for alarm from the bites of venomous creatures. I know a medical gentleman in extensive practice, who for the last seven years has not had a case of a dangerous character from the venom of either insects or reptiles in this province.

CHAPTER VIII.

Distant view of Buenos Ayres—Landing at the port—The Muralla, or sea-wall—Aspect of the city—Plaza de la Victoria—Churches and mansions—Arrangement and furniture of houses—Market and prices of edibles—Buenos Ayres an expensive place to live in—The Alaméda, or promenade—Bullock-carts and their drivers—Hickman's public pleasure-grounds—Residence of General Rosas—The Retiro and Protestant cemetery—Striking panoramic view—The Recolota church, convent, and cemetery—Funeral rites and burials of the poor—Bathing by lamplight.

The city of Buenos Ayres, as seen from the outer roads, a distance of seven miles from the shore, appears beautiful and attractive: but

"'Tis distance lends enchantment to the view."

Its site being somewhat elevated, breaks the monotony of the flat coast, through which the muddy waters of the Rio de la Plata discharge themselves into the sea. The voyager, having sailed about a hundred and twenty miles up the River Plate, is captivated by the graceful outlines formed by the towers and cupolas of immense churches; and his

gaze is rivetted on the beautiful and snow-white dome of the cathedral, towering alone high above the early mist, and glittering in the first gleams of the rising sun. It is, indeed, a glorious landmark.

On approaching the beach of a seaport which has been the scene of commerce for a period of more than three centuries, and is the outlet of a country equal in extent to that of the United States of North America, we naturally expect to find busy quays, crowded docks with navy-yards and ship-wrights. But here the rocks and sands, the soil and the water, are just as nature formed them; man has done nothing to improve the port. Passengers are obliged to disembark in boats which cannot reach the shore, but are stranded with their living freight, which is brought to land in large wheeled carts. General Rosas, however, early in 1847, commenced building the "muralla," or great sea-wall, designed to extend from the fort northward the whole length of the city; and which, if completed and planted, will form a magnificent esplanade, over one of the finest rivers in the world: a pier for landing passengers also formed part of this design. This is a gigantic undertaking, and when the feuds of party and the war of politics are forgotten, will be a lasting monument of its founder's desire for the improvement of the city.

The appearance of Buenos Ayres on landing, is anything but prepossessing; the filthy and dilapidated

look of the houses, which are only a single story high, tempts one to inquire whether they have owners or occupiers. There is but little appearance of trade or business : instead of the bustle of a great city, a stillness prevails like that of an English country-town. The streets crossing each other at right angles, and at equal distances, the plan of the city is aptly compared to a chessboard. They are wide enough to admit two broad-axled carriages to pass with facility; but the footpaths are inconveniently narrow. A few of the principal streets are paved and kept extremely clean; some of the less frequented, however, are so neglected as to be impassable: *pantanos*, or mud-holes, are so numerous, deep and dangerous, that a knowledge of the safe streets is indispensable. There are several spacious plazas, or squares; which, however, have nothing to recommend them to particular notice, beyond the large space they enclose.

The Plaza de la Victoria is the handsomest, and combines several objects of interest. On its south and east sides are beautiful piazzas, for the most part flagged with lozenge-shaped pieces of black and white marble; and under the well-formed arches are shops tastefully ornamented. The west side of the plaza is occupied with the cabildo or municipality, and public offices of the police department; and on the north side stands the unfinished Grecian portico of the cathedral.

The only public buildings worthy of note are the churches, which are on a scale of great magnitude; but their outward aspect indicates utter neglect, and strikingly contrasts with the gorgeous magnificence and massive grandeur of the interior. Although many symptoms of declining prosperity offend the eye, yet the stranger is impressed with a lively idea of the whilom grandeur of this South American capital; which, as Lord Byron said of Venice, "dies daily."

Some of the better class of residences are beautiful edifices; but the effect of them is lost from the narrowness of the streets. They are usually double houses; fronting the street is a large massive gate, which admits into an open courtyard called the patio, around which are the principal apartments; a spacious archway leads to a second quadrangle, containing the bedchambers; this is flanked by a third court, in which are the kitchen, and servants' apartments. These patios, or courts, are usually ornamented with choice plants and flowers: sometimes an orange-tree occupies the centre; or the whole may be shaded by a trellis covered with the foliage of an outspreading vine, the purple clusters of grapes depending overhead. The flat roofs, called *azoteas*, form a most delightful retreat in the evenings of summer, when the rooms are oppressively hot. This style of house-building, however, includes no provision for a passage leading to all the apart-

ments; in order to go from the front to the rear of a house, from the saloon to the kitchen, or your chamber, you must pass through all the intervening rooms, or cross the courts. This defect is fatal to the comfort of a dwelling.

The respectable classes exhibit a love of splendour in their houses, which display costly and elegant furniture; they evince also a laudable desire to adopt every improvement of the age. The taste of the ladies is evident in arranging the bedchambers, which are also used as boudoirs: the couch is adorned with the richest hangings; the counterpane is of crimson silk damask, with deep fringes; the bolsters and pillows are covered with rich satin, edged with embroidered lace.

The most lively and busy scene is the market, which is held in a large quadrangle, filled with roofed sheds placed at equal distances, occupied by butchers and dealers in fruit and vegetables. The first impression of a stranger upon visiting the market is that of wonder; the varieties of complexion and costume, including specimens of the human race from almost every country in the world, and the Babel of tongues from all nations, so confound the senses, that it is difficult to describe the effect. Surely no other city in the world could present such a motley assemblage; and the diversity of physiognomy is so great that one might doubt if mankind are all descended from a common stock.

The olive-complexioned Spaniard, sallow Frenchman, and ruddy Englishman, are intermingled with Indian, Tartar, Jewish, and Negro physiognomies; while women fair as the lily, and beaming with beauty, contrast with others dark as night: the air and costume of different classes enhance the confusion.

Large unwieldy bullock-carts are laden with fish, of which there is a great variety, very cheap, and often extremely delicate. A prime fish, sufficient for a family, may be had for sixpence; as whatever remains unsold by a certain hour must be removed, and quantities are frequently thrown away. Flocks of turkeys, ducks, fowls, and geese, increase the clamour; dead wild fowl, including partridges and plovers, are piled in heaps; all the vegetables of an English garden, with the addition of pumpkins and batatas (or sweet potatoes), are in abundance. Melons and other fruits are placed on the ground, while the more delicate kinds, such as peaches, grapes, and figs, are arranged on benches. The appearance of the meat is not agreeable: it is brought into town from the slaughtering-ground, and looks black and dirty. It is sold by the piece, not by the pound: some butchers contracting to supply a family with sufficient meat for a fixed monthly payment. It is not easy to quote prices in sterling money, as the exchange varies so much; but by law butchers are obliged to sell beef at three dollars

(valued at an average of threepence) for an *arroba*, weighing twenty-five pounds, which would give beef at ninepence for twenty-five pounds: but to prevent disputes as to quality, it is usual to give a few dollars more. The wild fowl are always to be had for less than one-half the price of domestic fowls; partridges nearly the size of a pheasant cost ninepence each; wild ducks, per pair, the same price; turkeys, one shilling and ninepence each. Vegetables, owing to the want of a suburban population, are dearer than in London; and a pound of butter will usually cost in the town as much as a sheep would cost in the country: butter occasionally has reached five shillings per pound.

Buenos Ayres is an expensive place to reside in: rents are enormous, and servants are highly paid, though unmanageable. Hotels and boarding-houses are numerous; several are kept by English and Americans.

The environs of a large city are a pretty faithful indication of the place itself: a sort of introduction or table of contents, foreshadowing what may be expected in the city. If the suburban lanes and villages are the haunts of ignorance, vice, and crime, it is usually because the city has made them such; if the people are cleanly, industrious, happy, and well-conducted, it is the result of the intelligence and energy of their civic brethren. A ramble through the outskirts of Buenos Ayres,

will throw some light upon the condition of the city itself.

Proceeding down a steep street, I reached the Alameda, the public walk of Buenos Ayres; which which was then in process of extension. A row of trees afforded an agreeable shade to hundreds of natives and foreigners, who frequent this pleasant retreat, and exchange salutations, or the latest news and gossip. Equestrians, male and female, filled up the extreme distance northward, where the Alameda stretches along the beach; equipages were comparatively few.

Laundrywomen covered the green sward with linen clothes; the whiteness of the linen presenting a striking contrast to the women, who are nearly all negresses. Passing the guard-house, where a barefooted, ill-clad negro stands sentinel, you come to a battery of ten brass guns, well mounted, and in good order, but protected by neither wall nor fosse; and the earth is so loosely thrown up, that a high wind with a flood-tide would wash it all away.

A striking and expansive view now opens upon the sight: on one side is the river; on the other a graceful slope, well planted with trees and shrubs, stretches away into the distance, and forms the foreground or base of a lofty terrace of elegant houses, chiefly occupied by foreigners. The Recoleta church and cemetery look down from their com-

manding position, requiring only the addition of trees to render them an attractive feature in the landscape.

Here the beach expands into an immense breadth of green sward, comprising hundreds of acres, covered with short sweet grass. Bullock-carts from the interior rendesvouz here: I have seen a train of twenty carts just arrived from the north, halting after a journey of nearly a thousand miles; the bullocks loosed from their traces straying about, some grazing, others resting, and one or two perhaps dying of fatigue and hunger. The hides are stripped off those that die, and the carcass is left to be devoured by dogs while fresh; it afterwards becomes not only offensive, but at night dangerous to equestrians. The wild and fierce aspect of the bullock-drivers excites a feeling of apprehension in strangers; nor is their manner calculated to inspire confidence: they receive a visitor coldly—a custom peculiar to their class. To their narrow intellect, the inquiring habits of Europeans are beyond their comprehension, and they regard with aversion and suspicion any attempt to engage them in conversation. They prepare their food in the simple mode adopted by gipsies and other nomadic tribes; with a flint and steel and a few sticks they soon kindle a fire, at which they cook their beef in the usual fashion.

In contrast with these groups of South American

Arabs, is the scene in the public pleasure-grounds recently opened by Mr. Hickman; between which and the city, vehicles run at stated intervals. Upon entering, several family groups were seen either reclining under the shade of the trees, partaking of fruits and refreshments, promenading, or dancing to a guitar. Ascending a spacious walk, leading to the high ground, a commanding view of the harbour is obtained; and in every direction trees laden with peaches, figs, pomegranates, lemons, and oranges, greeted the eye. In such a place, we are moved to happiness and joy; our spirits become more ethereal, and the mental vision glows with the colours of the fruits and flowers.

The late private residence of General Rosas was pointed out to me; when, naturally expecting to find it surrounded by woods, lawns, and all the accessories of a country-house, I was surprised to see nothing of the sort here: the view was then little else than an extended plain, with a young plantation along the river, and a foreground of mud huts, with plantations of canes, and a waste covered with gigantic thistles. Various improvements were being made, and plantations were then springing up; but the situation is so flat, as to defeat any attempt at picturesque landscape gardening. Tame ostriches and lamas wandered in a field fronting the house, and birds of varied and beautiful plumage were seen amongst the trees; while the horned plover, hawk,

and other birds of prey, filled the air with their discordant notes.

Passing down Peru-street, which is well paved and occupied by wealthy inhabitants, the Retiro is approached, a large square, flanked on the river side by a spacious building now used as a barrack, but formerly devoted to bull-fights: this favourite amusement of the Spanish aristocracy has, however, been suppressed in Buenos Ayres.

A little beyond the Retiro is the old Protestant cemetery—the first spot that was ever set apart in this country as the "winter-house" of deceased Protestants—which was constructed in 1821, at an expense of 800*l.*, subscribed by Protestant residents: it is not now made use of. Prior to its formation, however, the public cemeteries of the country were closed against any member of the human family who had professed the reformed faith; the bodies of all such "schismatics" being usually buried by the high road, which leads from the Retiro to the river, unless extraordinary influence (bribery included) was exerted to obtain interment in "consecrated ground."

Passing the cemetery, we approached a beautiful scene, made more lovely by groves of orange and lemon trees, heavily laden with golden fruit glowing in the sunlight from out the deep green of the foliage. The panorama spread out before the eye presents the most startling points of contrast:

here a fertile tract of land, there a barren waste; villas and gardens, showing signs of wealth and taste, adjoin miserable mud-built huts; at one moment the air is laden with balmy perfumes, presently the sense is sickened by the effluvia from a putrid carcass.

Such repulsive incongruities are common to all the suburbs; and it is painful to contemplate the decay and neglect, the filth and squalor, that offend the senses in every direction. At no very remote period, the suburbs were the residences of the more wealthy and respectable classes; but now their villas and pleasure-grounds are fast going to ruin. Occasionally a neat residence is met with, wearing the appearance of comfort and elegance; but it is most likely the property of some foreigner: indeed, judging from the aspect of the place, it might be supposed that the inhabitants, as if by common consent, had abandoned the suburbs.

The Recolita, the only native cemetery attached to the city, is beautifully situated on a lofty bank of the river. The church was built on a scale of great magnitude, but, like all similar structures in the country, it is fast crumbling to decay: the exterior wears an aspect of desolation; the roof and interior of the church, however, are well kept. The Recolitans are a branch of the Franciscan friars, whose duty it is to take care of the dead, and shrive the dying.

The poverty of the country induced General

Rosas to publish a decree that not more than two mourning coaches should follow a corpse to the cemetery; and the custom of wearing mourning was subsequently dispensed with, excepting only a crape band, or bracelet on the arm, according to the sex: mourning habiliments being considered beyond the means of the population. When a hearse reaches the gate of a cemetery, the coffin is borne into a small chapel, where candles burn on a very unassuming altar; a mass for the repose of the soul is said by a friar, and the body is then deposited in the vault or grave. The names of many illustrious dead —poets, patriots, and warriors—are here recorded. The cemetery is intersected with walks, shaded with trees; lemon and orange being as numerous as the funereal cypress.

While I was viewing the scene, a cart drawn by a mule drove up at a rapid pace; it contained two shells without lids, in each of which was a dead body covered with ragged woollen garments. There were no attendant mourners—poverty seldom has any; and the grave-diggers—one a negro, the other a mulatto—unceremoniously lifting the shells out of the cart, placed them on barrows, and disappeared amongst the tombs. Desirous of seeing the interment of the poor, as well as the rich, I walked in the direction taken by the grave-diggers, and met them returning with the empty shells; on reaching the extreme end of the cemetery, which

was overgrown with nettles and rank weeds, I observed that the bodies, without any coffin, and covered only by an old woollen garment, had been thrown into a large pit, always kept open, into which the poor are flung, without any religious ceremony.

While enjoying an evening walk on the Alameda, the beach assumed an unearthly appearance, from the dim light emitted by numberless lamps used by the bathers. The scene was most peculiar: here a family group were undressing, and robing themselves in bathing dresses; there another group, fresh from the water, searching for their garments amongst the rocks or on the sands. Hundreds of all classes, and of all ages, were bathing: men, women, and children, appeared to mingle in joyous sport, as the eye glanced along the agitated surface of the water, enlivened by the bathers. The greatest decorum, however, is observed. While sitting under a tree, enjoying the brilliant moonlight and the soft balmy air of evening, many of the bathers passed me on their return; the women wearing flowing robes, and permitting their hair to fall loosely around their shoulders, "their long locks, black as the raven's wing, floating in the gentle breeze."

CHAPTER IX.

Climate and so ,] of Buenos Ayres — Terrific storms — The "Pampero"—Winter comfortless for want of warm dwellings —Inundations of plains and neglect of roads—Meteorological table—Showers of ice—Invigorating effect of winter—Autumn and spring delightful — Gradual change in the temperature of the seasons—Miasma and fevers unknown, but contagious diseases prevalent—The medical profession, its government and members—Anointing with grease a universal practice—Races composing the inhabitants of Buenos Ayres, and other provinces—Numbers of the population of the Argentine Provinces—British emigrants.

The name of Buenos Ayres (good air) implies a fine climate; and certainly this province is remarkable for an equable mildness of temperature, and the salubrity of the atmosphere. In mildness of temperature, it is not equal to Chilé, or Lima, on the west coast; nor even to some parts eastward of the Andes, such as Chuquisca in Bolivia; yet it may fairly vie with them in salubrity.

The geological formation of the province of

Buenos Ayres is an alluvial deposit, extending from the wide-spread spurs of the Andes to the sea. The soil is for the most part unmixed with pebbles; and the country a flat and unbroken level.

The months of December, January, and February, are hot, and occasionally very oppressive. During the prevalence, however, of northerly winds, which surcharge the air with moisture, the atmosphere is much complained of as becoming stagnant and heavy. Clouds are then eagerly looked for in the west, as the desired signs of an approaching tempest; and the incessant mutterings of distant thunder are welcomed, though the storm is generally preceded by a hurricane of dust. Doors and windows are immediately secured, and the traveller hastens to a shelter. "Darkness which may be felt" soon covers the earth as with a pall, keen and vivid lightnings making that darkness visible; while heavy drops of rain, precursors of the tempest, increase till they fall in continuous streams: a deluge of rain pouring down. The thunder-peals are awful, rolling and reverberating without intermission; and lightnings blaze almost incessantly. To an unaccustomed beholder, the scene is terrific and sublime in the extreme. The storm lasts perhaps an hour or two, when the elements appear to have exhausted their force. Doors and windows are again opened, and the cold, bracing "Pampero," or fresh breeze of

the Pampas, so anxiously looked for, rushes in at every aperture, purifying the dwellings from their hot and suffocating air; and the sun now smiling upon the scene, nature seems to rejoice in its renewed vigour. The pampero then continues its course northward, driving before it dense masses of cloud, and renewing the materials for fresh electric explosions: it often reaches to the regions of Rio Janeiro, upwards of a thousand miles distant.

Winter is by no means disagreeable, at least to those who know what winter is in England; and much of the inconvenience felt during the winter months arises from other than atmospheric causes. The houses, ill built with mud-plastered walls and brick floors, absorb and retain much moisture; and the general absence of fire-places in the rooms renders them chilly and comfortless: grates, however, have been recently introduced into all new houses, and stoves into many old ones. But though these improvements constitute comforts, they are not considered necessaries, and many natives prefer passing the winter wrapped in their shawls and cloaks, without a fire. It must be acknowledged that fires, especially if the room be small and much heated, greatly predispose to colds and catarrhs.

During winter, the country is laid under water for miles round, owing to the flatness of the surface; thus rendering a journey immensely labo-

rious. Before the road to San José de Flores was repaired to do honour to General Quiroga on his entry into the city, it often occupied eight days for carts to make the journey, although the distance is not more than four or five miles; and it frequently happens that troops of carts, coming from some of the smaller towns during the winter, occupy two months in reaching a distance which in summer may be accomplished in a few days. Although the want of stone or sand in the country is some excuse for bad roads, yet there is no sufficient justification of the shameful neglect, and inattention to all approaches to the city. The second bridge, as it is called, on the great road to the south, which crosses a very deep and broad stream, has been left in a ruined state: there is not a square yard in any part of it safe for the traveller. The roadways of the city, also, are very bad; along those which are paved, the communication is at all times sufficiently easy, but in the unpaved portion, which includes the greater part of the streets, it is exceedingly difficult. In some streets the rains have washed away the soil six or seven feet below the footpath, making those parts dangerous at night; and other streets are so neglected as to be absolutely useless for wheeled vehicles of any description.

The thermometer seldom falls below 43 or 44 degrees, and the average temperature may be taken during the winter months at 52 degrees. The fol-

lowing table shows the result of meteorological observations in Buenos Ayres, in one year:—

		Thermometer.			Barometer.		
		Max.	Mean.	Min.	Ma x.	Mean.	Min.
Summer	January ..	91	71·81	60	No	observa	tions.
	February ..	89	73·00	58	30·04	29·58	29·21
Autumn	March	82	70·83	53	29·88	29·61	29.33
	April	79	62·04	43	29·82	29·73	29·46
	May	68	58·31	44	30·18	29·76	29·21
Winter	June	66	54·32	40	30·05	29·77	29·23
	July	68	52·55	38	30·17	29.65	29·21
	August....	66	51·83	36	30·21	29·84	29·51
Spring	September	72	54·64	42	30·41	29·74	29·32
	October ..	81	58·91	46	30·13	29·67	29·34
	November	88	68·43	56	29·91	29·61	29·17
	December	86	70.91	62	30·00	29·45	29·15

Thin ice may be found occasionally; but during winter is seen only for a few hours in the morning. Hailstorms, or rather showers of ice, are not infrequent: they are very destructive to windows and gardens. The heaviest shower of ice known for several years fell on the 28th of May 1846: it lasted four or five minutes, and was accompanied by heavy rain. The noise resembled the breaking of waves on the sea-shore, and the pieces varied in form and

size: some were icicles, two or three inches long; others resembled thick rings, the inner edge being studded with crystal spikes; and some were the size of a St. Michael's orange, but flat. Many years ago a shower of ice fell, the form of the pieces being circular, with a hole in the centre, as already described, some weighing from three to four pounds; many individuals were killed, as also birds, calves, and deer innumerable.

In the country, or campo, usually termed "the camp" by country people, slight frosts are very frequent, and the cold in winter is often sharp, sometimes even severe. It will thus be seen that an immigrant to this warmer region will find a climate which in its changes somewhat resembles his own, and that the difference is not so great as to create any apprehension of a violent effect on the constitution. Winter also braces and revives the frame, and fully compensates for any enervating effect caused by the heats of summer. It may, however, be stated as a general rule, that the climate relaxes the young and robust, while it invigorates those advanced in years.

Of the spring and autumn it is impossible to speak with too much praise. The breeze sweeping over a boundless plain covered with flowers, is laden both evening and morning with the most fragrant perfumes. The days are mild, cool, and elastic, and succeeded by nights of cloudless serenity, which can

not be surpassed for repose and beauty. All that man can desire either in equality of climate, lightness of atmosphere, splendour of sunshine, softness of temperature, effulgence of moonlight, and the ineffable beauties of the starry heavens, unite to render the country at these seasons peculiarly delightful. Its health-restoring qualities have been long and gratefully remembered by invalids from other countries, who generally find the relief they seek: many whom the climate of Brazil fails to restore, recover by a brief sojourn here.

It may not be out of place to record the observation, made by natives as well as foreigners, on the change that is taking place in the seasons. It is remarked that the summers were decidedly hotter, and the winters much colder twenty years ago than at present; and as a particular fact confirming this assertion, it is stated that at the festival of the Recoleta fair, held on the 12th of October, every one formerly was compelled by the heat to put on light clothing: which certainly is not the case now. Moreover, the older writers speak of heat, fleas, musquitos, &c., as almost insupportable; which proves that either they were much more thin-skinned, or these plagues much more violent than the present generation finds them.

Notwithstanding the dampness of the atmosphere in some seasons of the year, and the vast sheets of water that cover the Pampas in the winter, followed

by the heats of summer, *miasma* is unknown. There is no ague, typhus, or infectious fever of any kind; and it may with truth be generally asserted, that were it not for intemperance, epidemic disease would be almost unknown. Unfortunately this immunity does not extend to contagious diseases, such as measles, small-pox, and scarlatina; these have repeatedly appeared, in their most violent and fatal forms.

The "tribunal de medicina" is charged with the general inspection and care of all that appertains to the medical profession and to the public health. It is formed on the French model, and has the power of licensing medical practitioners, apothecaries, dentists, and midwives. Medicine and surgery are included in the same license; the absurdity of separating these two branches of the healing art being repudiated. This tribunal is very liberal to foreigners; any gentleman exhibiting proofs of his having had a fair medical education being admitted to practise, after an examination in the language of the country.

The number of native practitioners has very much increased of late years, many young men having turned their attention to the study of medicine: they were greatly needed, not only in the city, but throughout the province, and in the army. They are, in general, a superior class of men, and maintain the dignity of their profession. There is,

however, no medical periodical as yet published, and the profession is sometimes obliged to record very remarkable cases in the public papers; and not infrequently the gratitude of some patient impels him to return thanks through the same channel for a cure performed by a practitioner. Fees are small, owing to the present depression of the paper currency: ten paper dollars (or about 2*s*.) a visit, and eighty dollars (or 16*s*.) for a consultation. Operations, the charge for which was formerly extravagantly high, owing to the scarcity of men of ability, are now more moderately remunerated. Though there are no opportunities for medical men acquiring large fortunes, there are many good openings for practitioners in the interior, and also in Paraguay, the Banda Oriental, and Monte Video.

The universal remedy of the natives, used upon all occasions, is the *sabo*, or grease. Anointing with grease is practised by women of every grade in society; and it is supposed to be a cure for all diseases. This filthy practice was probably acquired from the Indians, who smear themselves with mares'-oil.

A very marked difference exists between the inhabitants of these provinces and those of a colder region, as shown in the greater nervous and vascular susceptibility of the Buenos Ayreans; which is too fatally evident in the frequency of aneurisms of the heart, and the number of sudden deaths that

occur during an unusually hot summer. Of late years, also, the terror arising from political convulsions has frequently produced sudden death. For many of these particulars I am indebted to my good friend Dr. William Mackenna, who has also enriched my collections by other valuable contributions of his pen.

The population of the city and province of Buenos Ayres has undergone a visible change within the last fifty years, as regards the different races, or castes, which formerly composed the inhabitants. In the reports made to the Spanish government at the close of the last century, the population was represented as consisting of—pure Spaniards; mestizoes, the offspring of the Indian and Spaniard; mulattoes, the offspring of Spaniards and negroes: these, together with Indians, and negro slaves, formed five castes. The present population, however, may be divided into two great classes, *natives* and *foreigners*. The former comprehends the pure Spaniards, and the creoles or mulattoes; the latter comprehends all immigrants and their offspring. The pure Indians have withdrawn beyond the frontier line, with the exception of such as are attached to the army; and the negroes, since the abolition of slavery, have gradually disappeared, and must soon become totally extinct. The population, however, still contains a very large share of Indian and negro blood; but these mixed races are giving place to the

pure Spanish, together with other races from the continent of Europe.

It may not be out of place to take a passing glance at the different races that people the whole of this part of Spanish America. Although it is generally understood that the country is peopled by the Spanish race, yet the slightest inquiry will show that they form an extremely small portion of the inhabitants. In the capital cities and the towns of different provinces, pure Spanish families are to be found; but not in any considerable numbers. Throughout the great mass of the population, Indian blood preponderates. Along the shores of the rivers Plate, Parana, and Paraguay, there is a large mixture of negro blood; but it is not so traceable beyond the banks of those rivers, and is becoming rapidly extinct. In the provinces of Corrientes and Santiago, the Indian language is chiefly spoken; but in all the other provinces, although retaining the greatest portion of Indian blood, Spanish is the language in use. Since the independence of those provinces, pure Indian tribes have become much more hostile to the Spaniards than they were prior to that epoch; and, judging from present appearances, they are much more likely to regain portions of their former territory, than to yield to any further encroachments on the part of the Iberian race.

I travelled through a large district in the north of the province of Santa Fé, which was at one period

densely peopled, but which has now become desolate in consequence of the increasing power of the Indians; and of late years, all the provinces, Buenos Ayres excepted, have, owing to their exposed and defenceless state, suffered very much by the wild inroads of the less civilized Indians. The jealous and hostile feeling unhappily existing between the provinces, together with the evils resulting from civil war, have reduced the Spanish-speaking portion of this part of the world to an extremely feeble condition; and the ability of the mixed races to maintain themselves against any continued hostility on the part of the pure Indians, is a matter of some doubt.

It is difficult to form a correct estimate as to the extent of population. During the government of the Spanish viceroys, any attempt to take a census was looked upon with alarm, arising from the belief that it was the forerunner of some exaction on the part of the mother-country. The people, therefore, were more disposed to conceal their numbers than to make a true return; and since the independence of the country was proclaimed, the protraction of civil strife has occasioned this interesting branch of statistics to be neglected. The subject has been closely investigated in the valuable work of Sir Woodbine Parish, but that author laboured under the same disadvantage with which all other writers on the same subject have to contend—correct data not being available. He states the population of the

city of Buenos Ayres, in 1778, to be 24,205 souls, and the country 12,925. In 1800, Azara estimated the city at 40,000, and 34,688 for the province. The present population of the city is about 80,000, presuming that Azara was correct; for although half a century has elapsed since he made his calculation, during which period from eight to ten thousand foreigners have settled in the city, yet the ceaseless drain of destructive civil wars for nearly thirty years has checked the natural increase.

I estimate the entire population of the Argentine Republic, in round numbers, at about half a million of souls, spread over a territory equal in extent to the United States of North America. Both continents were discovered at the same time, yet the latter country has now within its territory twenty millions of people; and before the close of the present century, will probably contain a hundred millions of an English-speaking population.

So long as this part of America was under Spanish rule, the population appears to have maintained its numerical strength; settlers from the mother-country, negro slaves from Africa, and half-civilized Indian tribes, being the sources for augmenting their numbers. Since the country became independent, a feeling of jealousy has been manifested towards the Spaniards from the continent of Europe, and the slave-trade has also been pro-

hibited. These altered circumstances, combined with civil war, have not only obstructed the increase of the population, but caused its decrease. Probably the present population does not greatly exceed that of the year 1800.

The following is the estimated population of the several provinces in 1848 :—

Province of	Buenos Ayres	200,000
„	Santa Fé	18,000
„	Entre Rios	22,000
„	Corrientes	32,000
„	Cordova	65,000
„	Santiago	45,000
„	Tucuman	45,000
„	Salta	50,000
„	Catamarca	25,000
„	La Rioja	17,000
„	San Luis	20,000
„	Mendoza	35,000
„	San Juan	22,000
		596,000

This estimate is much below that which is usually given ; but from personal investigation in the provinces which I visited, I discovered that the population was greatly over-rated, and have accordingly reduced the estimate of those provinces which I did not visit, in proportion to such as came under my own scrutiny. Independent tribes of Indians are, however, not included.

The population of the Banda Oriental may be estimated to be 100,000, one-half being Brazilians and Europeans. Sir W. Parish, in 1836, estimated Paraguay to be about 250,000; which I believe to be the extreme amount.

These numbers do not include foreigners and emigrants; who, however, are not very numerous. South America has never been preferred by emigrants from the United Kingdom. About the year 1825, special encouragement was given to British subjects by the Government of Rivadavia, with the view of inducing them to colonize the banks of the River Plate; and at that period several hundred Scotch and English settlers and mechanics arrived in the country, chiefly under the patronage of mining or land associations. All these undertakings, however, disappointed the hopes of their founders, and the emigration ceased. The numbers of British residents are not at present greater than they were in 1825.

But although the English and Scotch population have not increased, an unexpected tide of Irish emigrants has set in. The first arrivals came in 1825 from North America, where they had been previously settled; and since then a few have occasionally come direct from Ireland, who saved money, and sent home for their friends. At least three-fourths of the emigrants are from the County Westmeath. According to the estimate

of their excellent pastor, the Reverend Mr. Fahy, their number, prior to the Anglo-French intervention, was about 3,500, including all ages and sexes. One lamentable fact is the deficiency of women, three-fourths of the immigrants being single men. When females do arrive, they are eagerly sought after, and happy is the swain upon whom the fair one smiles: the Irish seldom or never intermarry with the natives.

There is no country where the labouring classes are so well rewarded as in the province of Buenos Ayres, which opens a boundless field for the laborious and enterprising. British subjects are preferred, not only by the authorities, but by the great mass of the native population; and the Irish, for many reasons, are particularly acceptable.

The navigation of the rivers is rapidly passing into the hands of Italians; and, of late years, French mechanics have out-numbered the English.

CHAPTER X.

The Argentine Provinces deficient in water—The four great rivers—Causes of the want of water—Small proportion of wet days in the year—Canals impossible—Surface water only available—Course of the principal rivers favourable for commercial intercommunication—The Rio de la Plata, the Paraguay, the Parana—Importance of great rivers—Extent of inland navigation—Mode of communication between Buenos Ayres and Salta—The two high roads through the Provinces—Bullock-carts the only means of carriage for merchandize—Duration of long journeys—Numbers of cattle and drivers employed in a troop—Difficulties of the route—Food and habits of the drivers—Expenses of carriage—Water communication wholly disregarded.

The reader who may have consulted a map of South America, will probably have been struck with admiration at the number of rivers indicated as intersecting the Argentine Provinces, which appear to be a well-watered country; but the fact is, that most of these are shallow water-courses, whose sluggish streams are almost dried up in summer,

though they become swollen by winter rains, and soon overflow their banks, and inundate the plains. The Plata, the Uruguay, the Gualaguay, and the Parana, are the only rivers worthy of the name. The cause of this deficiency is found in the nature of the country.

The whole extent of territory, with a small exception, is one vast grassy plain, or prairie; the greater part of which appears a dead level to the eye. From the borders of Patagonia to the bounds of Salta—a distance of perhaps fifteen hundred miles—the traveller's solitary way may never be cheered or varied by the welcome sight of hills. The majestic Andes, which form the western boundary, pour down their everlasting waters upon these plains, in a multitude of streams and of rivers; which, however, on reaching the base of the mountains, spread themselves over the plains without forming any very decided course, and become evaporated by the air, or absorbed by the soil. So it is with the waters from the hills around Tandil, and also those from the mountains in the province of Cordova. Streams which form exceptions to this remark, and whose waters may ultimately reach the Atlantic, or the great rivers, become considerably diminished by similar influences. In some instances they continue their course between well-defined banks, and are eventually lost in some level country; where they

either form a shallow lake, or creep lazily on, scarcely seeming to move, or exist as a stream: in winter, some rivers are swollen into rapid streams, which in summer are nearly dried up. A traveller will hear the streams and rivers much spoken of, but on reaching them he will find a watercourse dried up, or a languid flow of water so insignificant that he is tempted to ask, "Where is the river?"

The causes that prevent the formation of considerable rivers also forbid the existence of many land-springs, which are formed by a conjunction of subterranean waters brought together by the irregularity of the earth through which they percolate; but in this part of the world the earth forms almost a plane, and is consequently without springs.

For the same reason, there are no permanent lakes: the ground having no declivity to conduct rain-water onwards in streams or rivers, it spreads over the level surface until it reaches some lower spot, where it forms a shallow lake (or laguna), which often becomes dried up in summer. The inhabitants, therefore, usually suffer much from a deficiency of water; the rain which falls being very insufficient.

The following record, kept by J. Wilde, Esq., of the number of days on which rain fell in Buenos

Ayres, during a period of seven years, shows an average of only 73½ days in each year :—

	1841.	1842.	1843.	1844.	1845.	1846.	1847.	Total.
January . . .	7	4	4	8	8	10	4	45
February	1	7	8	12	4	5	4	41
March	10	5	4	3	3	4	2	31
April	4	6	8	10	6	8	6	48
May	3	2	12	5	6	12	4	44
June	6	10	6	4	3	6	5	40
July	4	6	8	3	7	7	9	44
August	3	8	3	3	8	5	2	32
September ...	3	2	7	12	8	3	9	44
October	8	4	10	9	7	11	10	59
November ...	7	7	7	6	10	5	9	51
December	4	3	3	9	6	7	4	36
Total No. of wet days in each year.	60	64	80	84	76	83	68	

A further evil arising from the flatness of the country, in conjunction with the warmth and dryness of the climate, is the impossibility of maintaining canals. It is a surprising circumstance that gentlemen who possessed sufficient influence to raise

a loan of a million sterling in England, partly for the formation of canals, had not the discretion first to ascertain the practicability of carrying out their plans. Neither can water-mills, or other machinery worked by water-power, ever be general. In short, the country would be, to a very considerable extent, uninhabitable, were it not that water is generally found near the surface. In almost all parts of the country—some districts in the northern provinces excepted—wells of a few feet in depth supply abundance of water; the subsoil being of such a nature as to resist the filtration of water through it, thus forcing it to remain on the surface.

But, as if to atone for this general deficiency of water, the magnificent rivers La Plata, Parana, Paraguay, and Uruguay, run like arteries through the heart of the territory, affording an unbroken channel of communication, for many thousand miles, between the fertile regions of this vast continent. These mighty rivers are so situated as to make all the resources of the country available, and virtually to bring some of the most distant parts of the territory into proximity. The rich pastures of the Pampas, extending far away towards Cape Horn, can exchange the excess of their productions with the mineral districts of Bolivia; while the whole of that unknown world forming the back-ground of Brazil, and reaching on towards the sources of the Amazon and Oronoco, are ready to pour all

their wealth into the lap of commerce. In a country as yet without any roads beyond the track made by the wheels of bullock-waggons, these rivers are destined to be the great channels of commerce, and the means of communicating arts, sciences, civilization, and happiness, to peoples now unknown. The entire population of the Argentine Provinces, at present engaged in pursuits incidental to a primitive state of society, must gradually concentrate in the neighbourhood of these rivers; on whose banks, towns many and populous will eventually rise into existence: as has been the case on the banks of the Mississippi.

The first river, in geographical order, is the Rio de la Plata; and, from the quantity of fresh water which it pours into the Atlantic, it is considered one of the wonders of the earth: long before the mariner comes within sight of land, he feels the influence of its mighty current; and a hundred miles out at sea, its turbid waters may be traced. At its mouth, between Maldonado and Cape St. Antonio, the width is at least 140 miles; and a little higher up, the distance from Santa Lucia to Laspeidras on the opposite shore, is fifty miles—double the distance from Dover to Calais. Before a vessel can anchor in the roadstead of Buenos Ayres, she must have ploughed through more than one hundred and fifty miles of fresh water.

About thirty miles above that city, the Rio de la Plata receives the waters of the Parana and the Uruguay.

The River Paraguay takes its rise about 13½° south latitude, and passes through the rich Brazilian territories of Motto Grozzo and Cuyaba; receiving in its course many tributaries from the eastward, where they may hereafter afford a communication with the valuable gold and diamond districts of Brazil. Lower down, it reaches the fertile province of Paraguay, which it continues to water for a distance of nearly six hundred miles, when it joins the Parana near Corrientes. In measuring the extent of inland navigation formed by the Parana and the Paraguay, we find a free and open water-course from Jauru, in latitude 16°, to the mouth of the River Plate; being nineteen degrees of latitude, measuring the straight distance north and south, through the whole of which there is not a rock or rapid to impede the navigation.

The most important tributaries of the Paraguay are the Pilcomayo and the Vermejo, which fall into it near Assumption; both of them taking their rise in the rich mineral districts of Upper Peru. The Vermejo is navigable, but its average depth has never been accurately determined: Morrillo and Cornijo estimate it at at least three yards, whilst Soria and Descalse reduce it to twenty or twenty-five inches. By this river a free communication

might be opened with the province of Salta. The Pilcomayo is not navigable.

The Parana rises to the north-west of Rio de Janeiro, in latitude 21° south. Thence it runs for nearly two hundred miles, broken by many falls, until it reaches the Jesuit missions of Guarani; there it suddenly becomes reduced from a width of nearly three miles, to a rocky gorge of not more than a hundred yards wide, over which it falls with great force and volume, forming a splendid cataract of from fifty to sixty feet high. For a hundred miles afterwards, and as far as the mouth of the Curitaba, it is only a succession of falls and rapids; but on reaching Candilaria, once the chief town of the Jesuits, it turns westward, and flowing onward in an uninterrupted course, joins the Paraguay (as already stated) near Corrientes.

From the confluence of the Parana and Paraguay at Corrientes, the combined waters of these mighty streams flow on in a turbid and rapid course; separating the provinces of Corrientes and Entre Rios, from those of Santa Fé and Buenos Ayres; and finally entering the Plata at Martin Garcia. The Parana rises at two seasons of the year; the rains in the tropics swell it in winter, and the melting of the snow on the Andes has the same effect in summer: the heaviest floods are during the summer months, beginning with December, when it increases from eighteen to twenty-four

feet in depth. The Paraguay, owing to the narrowness of its channel, and the loftiness of its bank, rises to a much greater height.

In taking a comprehensive view of the capabilities of any country, as regards the elements of either national or commercial greatness, facility of intercourse between distant provinces must necessarily be one of the first objects of inquiry. It is impossible adequately to appreciate the value and importance of the Mississippi, the St. Lawrence, the Rhine, or the Danube, to those countries through which they respectively flow: they are the great arteries through which the life-blood of commerce flows, and without which plains now the scenes of industry and civilization, and forests which yield their primeval growth to man, would have remained the abodes of desolation, and haunts for wild beasts.

The Argentine Provinces cannot boast of one commodious harbour; but nature has munificently compensated them for this deficiency by many thousand miles of inland navigation, which, either directly or indirectly, are under their own control. The necessity that exists for the introduction of steam upon these rivers is already fully admitted; those who are competent to express an opinion upon the matter are aware that the country cannot make any sensible progress in power or in wealth, without the agency of steam communication. In describing the medium of transit common to all

these provinces, I may confine my remarks to the intercourse between the province of Salta, and the city of Buenos Ayres.

The communication between these important points should undoubtedly be by water rather than by land; until railroads and locomotives shall supersede the tedious, clumsy, and costly traffic of carts drawn by bullocks.

Two high roads traverse the Argentine territory: one serving for the commercial communications of Buenos Ayres with the provinces of San Luis, Mendoza, and the Republic of Chile; the other for those which Buenos Ayres keeps up with Cordoba, Santiago, Tucuman, Salta, and Jujuy; and leading also to the provinces of Upper Peru, or Bolivia. The former is 319½ leagues in length to Mendoza, and extends 104 leagues thence to Santiago de Chile, by the dangerous pass of Uspallata in the Cordillera; the latter embraces an extent of 528 leagues to Laquiaca; which, in this direction, forms the point of contact between the Argentine and the Bolivian Republic. This last distance is subdivided as follows:

	Leagues.
From Buenos Ayres to Cordoba	192
„ Cordoba to Santiago del Estero.....	130
„ Santiago to Tucuman	40
„ Tucuman to Salta	89
„ Salta to Jujuy	18
„ Jujuy to Laquiaca	59
Leagues.....	528

On leaving Jujuy for Peru, twenty-nine leagues before arriving at Laquiaca, is situated Humahuaca ; distant, according to Corness, twenty-two leagues from the confluence of the river of Jujuy with that of Tarissa, at which point the two rivers, under the name of " Bermejo," first become navigable.

The Argentine Provinces have no means of transit but by bullock-carts, for the manufacture of which there are considerable workshops in Tucuman. Notwithstanding the good quality of the timber used in these kind of vehicles, and the strength of their construction, they do not last above two years, on account of the roughness of the roads, and the alternate action of both sun and rain to which they are incessantly exposed. The tediousness of this mode of conveyance may be judged of from the fact, that a cart can make only four journeys from Buenos Ayres to Salta within two years : two going and two returning ; or, in the language of the country, two round trips. Every month in the year, however, is not available for these journeys ; although no weather absolutely precludes the undertaking. The carters prefer starting from Salta in the month of April or May, during which the rivers and swamps are shallow ; and they are averse to such journeys in July, August, September, and October, on account of the great scarcity of water and pasturage in the northern provinces. The period considered best for

loading in Buenos Ayres, homeward bound, is from April to the middle of November.

These expeditions are usually made in caravans or troops of fourteen carts, each of which, holding about thirty-five hundredweight, is drawn by six oxen, and also requires to have three spare yoke of cattle; the troop, therefore, requires 336 oxen to complete the journey, the whole being under the care of about thirty drivers. To reach Buenos Ayres from Salta, a distance of 450 leagues, takes about three months; the return journey occupies somewhat less time. The difficulties to be encountered are very great. Rains, hurricanes, and dust-storms, assail the caravan; and both men and beasts frequently suffer much from want of water and shelter. They are compelled to wade through innumerable swamps and inundations, some of which cannot be passed in a day; and thus the animals have to pass the whole night up to their bellies in water. But the chief difficulties are the rivers, over which there are no bridges: sometimes it is necessary to unload the whole of their cargoes, and swim the bullocks over, while the men float their carts, and ferry the goods across in pelotas, or rafts made of skins; or if the current is much swollen, they wait for days and weeks by the river side, until the flood has abated. But even when the journey is most prosperous, the waggons must be unloaded twice in the province of Santiago, and a

Ford & West lithog.

Buenos Ayres wagoners preparing supper

with Elder & Co London 1858

third time in Tucuman; and very few trains arrive at their destination without an occasional upset, besides carts needing repair, with a thousand other vexatious obtacles.

On the journey, the food of the men is beef and water. When they reach fertile and grassy plains they halt and recruit the animals. These bullock-drivers resemble sailors in character and habits: they are reckless, good-natured, and jolly. Sometimes the conductor brings his family with him in a separate waggon; and when two troops meet on a journey, they halt and enjoy a festivity. The men are all fond of dancing, and are never without a guitar; some are good improvisatori, and they relate the pleasures and adventures of their journeys to each other, as in the Bucolics of Virgil; and thus they pass away many a moonlight evening merrily dancing and singing. On their arrival in Buenos Ayres, gambling is their delight.

The expenses attending the transmission of goods by this mode of conveyance, including the duties payable in the different provinces through which the waggons pass, amount to 20*l.* per ton; and as the carts are laden chiefly with hides and hair, articles of great bulk in proportion to their value, the carriage alone must absorb forty or fifty per cent. of the first cost. European readers will scarcely credit the fact, that this long and toilsome

overland journey, of three months' duration, and of more than a thousand miles in extent, is made through a country without roads or bridges, along a track running parallel with the navigable river Parana and its tributaries. The introduction of steam-vessels upon the Parana and the Paraguay would not only enable the Argentine Provinces to bring their products readily to market, but would induce adventurous traders to penetrate into the very heart of the mineral districts of Brazil, Bolivia, and Peru.

For much solid information on the subject of roads and rivers, I am indebted to Don Pedro de Angelis, the author of several important volumes on the history of this country.

CHAPTER XI.

Saladeros, or cattle-steaming establishments—Mode of killing the beasts, curing the flesh, salting and drying hides, and extracting tallow from the carcass—Cost of establishing a Saladero—Price and purchase of cattle—Loss attending the driving of cattle to the city—Barracas or warehouses of Buenos Ayres, and brokerage of the barracero—Monetary matters—Bank of Buenos Ayres drained of its specie by Government—The Casada Moneda and its operations—The Savings Bank under official management—Fluctuating value of the paper currency of Buenos Ayres—Table of exchange—Mercantile operations based on barter—Working of the system — Currency of the other provinces — Circulating medium of Monte Video—Influence of British merchants—Prosperity of British settlers—Letters from Rev. Dr. W. Brown and Rev. A. D. Fahy, on the prospects of immigrants.

Cattle constitute one of the most important articles of production in these provinces, and there are in Buenos Ayres several very large establishments called Saladeros, where the beasts are slaughtered, the tallow extracted, the flesh salted and dried, and the hides prepared for exportation.

Summer, from November to March, is the season when these establishments do most business, the cattle being then in the best condition, and there being most sun for drying the flesh : cattle are seldom killed in winter, except for the hide only.

The mode of killing the animal is by lazoing it in the corral; a rope is then passed over the horns through a pulley, and attached to a yoke of oxen, by which means the animal is drawn up with its head close to a block ; the spinal marrow is then separated, and the beast falls on a moveable platform, which runs on a tramway, along which it is drawn by hand. This tramway is usually about forty yards long, and covered by a large shed, under which the men flay the carcass, and cut it up for curing.

This is a simple process: when the carcass has laid for an hour, the flesh is cut into strips of about half an inch in thickness, and put into tubs of pickle ; these strips are afterwards placed in piles, each about six yards square, consisting of alternate layers of beef and salt. On the next day it is turned over, and the third day, if time be an object, it is washed in pickle, and piled in the open air. In a few days afterwards the strips are hung across rails every morning to dry in the sun, and generally piled in the evening about an hour before sunset. In summer three days' sun will complete the process ; at other seasons it will require eight or ten

days, and in winter perhaps twenty. This is called "jerked beef," and is prepared only for shipment to the Brazils and the Havanna.

The hides are also prepared in a very simple manner: they are first steeped in brine, then washed and piled in layers of hides and salt; in which state they will keep safely for twelve months. Drying the hides, however, is a tedious operation requiring care and attention. Those required for the English or German market are stretched lengthwise only, so that the hide dries thicker. As many as twenty-four or twenty-six stakes are used to fasten down the two extremities to the ground, stretching the hide from head to tail, to make it long and narrow; by which it best attains its thickness. Those intended for Spain. or any country requiring thin leather, are staked so as to extend it both laterally and longitudinally as much as possible. Hides for England and Antwerp are generally twenty per cent. heavier than any others; and those for Spain are usually ten per cent. better in quality than ordinary.

The carcasses of oxen are steamed in this manner: as soon as the animal is slaughtered, it is cut up and stowed away in vats, the meat being so placed that the steam may penetrate through the whole pile. The bottom of the vat is first covered with large bones, then alternate layers of meat and bone are placed, in such a manner that the bones of the

fore and hind quarters shall overlap, leaving a space for the steam to penetrate and saturate the pile. The doors of the vat are then secured, and the steam turned on. At the end of twelve hours or more, according to the size of the vat, the liquid is drawn off by means of a large brass tap; the condensed steam, which first comes forth in a greasy liquid, being allowed to go to waste. Gradually liquid tallow begins to flow, and is received in tubs, from which it is rapidly conveyed to a large cast-iron boiler, where it undergoes a purifying process. The carcasses must be in a perfectly sweet state when placed in the vats, otherwise the smell of the tallow will be injured, and its value greatly lessened. They are steamed so long as any fat pours out; but when water only flows, then the operation is complete. From the boiler, the tallow is conveyed, through a shoot, into a large wrought-iron tank, where it is allowed to cool down. It is afterwards drawn off into casks, and prepared for shipment. The large vat on Mr. Dowdall's establishment will contain the carcasses of two hundred and fifty oxen: the steaming occupies from sixty to seventy hours. Mr. Dowdall has also two other boilers, each capable of steaming two hundred head of cattle daily. To that gentleman, as well as to Mr. Jonathan Downs, I am indebted for my information on this subject.

Saladeros were first established about the year 1815, when it was thought a rare matter to slaughter

in the same establishment a hundred animals per day; now there are about twenty such establishments in existence, each slaughtering from two to four hundred head per day, during the season.

Steaming the bones of oxen for the sake of the grease was commenced about twenty years ago; since which time the process has been continually improved, and the trade has been annually increasing.

Cattle are always paid for in cash; the present price is about three silver dollars each, if delivered in the Saladero. The cost of an establishment capable of slaughtering a thousand head per week, is about two thousand pounds; although several have cost their owners much more: the steaming apparatus alone will require about one thousand pounds.

Two enterprising Englishmen have lately commenced an establishment for preserving beef and mutton in tin cases; and the result so far has proved satisfactory. From the low prices of beef in this country, where the carcass of a fat ox can be obtained for six or eight shillings, it may reasonably be anticipated that a time will come when England and her colonies; the Brazils, and other parts of the world, will be supplied with beef from Buenos Ayres. In purchasing cattle for these establishments, whether direct from an estanciero or through an agent, all risk in conveying animals into the town rests with the purchaser; the responsibility of the seller ceasing when he has conveyed them

beyond the bounds of his estancia; but latterly, many of the influential estancieros sold their cattle deliverable at the Saladero.

There are men called Capatases, whose business it is to convey cattle from the lands of the seller, to the purchaser; one of these men, with five or six drovers, will usually take charge of about six hundred animals. Their payment is from five to fifteen paper dollars each head of cattle, according to the distance. It is not uncommon to lose from thirty to a hundred head out of a large drove; in some instances one hundred and fifty to two hundred head have been left on the way, and it has happened that a whole herd has been lost. The custom is to stop for the night, where there is good pasture; and the drovers are employed in riding round the cattle: on stormy nights, it is extremely difficult to keep the animals together; and when they begin to scatter, the whole herd may get into motion, and scamper off in every direction for several miles. If cattle be in good condition, they are driven at the rate of twenty-five to thirty miles per day; travelling by moonlight also in summer. Sometimes an animal is vicious and attacks the drovers; in which case it is lazoed, and a piece of the skin of the head is cut so as to hang partly over the eye, nearly obscuring the sight.

Another leading branch of industry is the management of barracas, or warehouses. The

produce of the country is usually offered for sale in the public plazas, either by the owner himself, or a broker; it is afterwards deposited in barracas, extensive establishments consisting of stores and sheds, where hydraulic presses are used for packing. The proprietor derives his income from warehouse or store rent, and his brokerage when employed to buy or sell; he is also often a dealer in produce. When a mercantile house wishes to export, a barracero is employed, who buys the articles required, packs the bales, and makes the shipment; his brokerage being one per cent. In the shipment of salted hides, it is also customary to employ a broker, who effects the whole transaction; his charge being one and a half per cent. In this way, the buying and shipping produce is reduced to a simple and uniform practice. There are altogether about sixty depôts, and dealers in native produce.

The accumulation of capital in the city of Buenos Ayres must be very considerable; for although the rate of interest in the discount of bills is from eighteen to twenty-four per cent. per annum, yet fixed property yields no more than from six to nine per cent. per annum. Gold, when borrowed, pays generally one per cent. per month. Discounting bills is chiefly monopolized by well-known money-lenders, of whom about one-half are foreigners; and it is gratifying to state that the Irish population are money-lenders

to a large amount; indeed their business alone would be an important item to a broker: yet they arrived in the country strangers, and in poverty.

The Provincial Bank of Buenos Ayres was established by charter in 1823, having the exclusive right of issuing notes in that province for twenty years, with a capital of one million Spanish dollars, in 1,000 shares of 1,000 dollars each. It was a private undertaking, not in any way connected with the government; and during its brief existence afforded accommodation to the commercial world, and yielded a fair profit to the shareholders: its shares were at one time worth 2,500 dollars. The directors and chief proprietors were British and other foreign merchants. In 1825, its character was changed: instead of being a Provincial Bank, it become a *National* Bank, for the purpose of circulating its notes through all the provinces, thereby increasing the field of its operations, and augmenting its profits. The capital of the National Bank was five million Spanish dollars, in shares of two hundred dollars each; seven shares of the National Bank being exchanged for one share of the Provincial Bank. Government subscribed three million dollars, and the public the remainder. The notes issued for circulation were payable in specie on demand; seventeen notes, of one dollar each, being exchangeable for what is commonly called a doubloon, or gold ounce. According to the practice of

the Provincial Bank, proprietors had the privilege of overdrawing their accounts, in a ratio proportionate to their stock. In the exercise of this right, the government first overdrew its credit to the full extent; then, under the alleged pressure of national necessity, and viewing the bank as a national institution, it gradually absorbed nearly all the capital, and about the same time relieved the bank from the necessity of cash payments; the State thus becoming a debtor to the shareholders. No steps, however, have been taken to fund or consolidate the debt; nor is it recognized as a debt in any of the public reports. The last annual dividend paid to the shareholders was in February, 1836, when four per cent. was divided.

In that year the character of the bank was again changed; indeed its functions as a bank entirely ceased, and it was called the "Casa de Moneda" (money house), or in other words the Mint. The paper first issued by the Casa de Moneda professed to be payable in specie—although it never really was; but it now simply represents so many dollars currency, and is a legal tender. This establishment offers to receive gold and silver on deposit, but without paying interest; few, therefore, take advantage of the accommodation. It also discounts bills to a certain amount at one per cent. per month; but although the rate of discount in the market is from one and a half to two per cent. per month, only a select few derive any benefit from this privilege.

A Savings Bank was instituted under government patronage in 1822, and went on prosperously until 1828; but about that period the military revolution disarranged everything, and for want of attention, it began to languish. The government, as its official guardian, then took charge of the funds; but no report of its operations has lately come before the public.

THE CURRENT RATES OF EXCHANGE ON ENGLAND FROM THE YEARS 1823 TO 1847 INCLUSIVE; COMPILED FROM THE NEWSPAPERS OF BUENOS AYRES.

	Jan.	April.	July.	Sept.		Jan.	April.	July.	Sept.
	D.	D.	D.	D.		D.	D.	D.	D.
1823	45	45	45	45	1836	6¾	6¾	7	7
1824	45	45	44½	45	1837	7½	7	6	6
1825	46	45	45	45½	1838	6	5½	5¾	5¾
1826	45	40	34	29	1839	4½	4	3½	3½
1827	20	18	15	13	1840	3¼	3	2	2
1828	12	22	16	17	1841	2¾	2¾	2¾	2¾
1829	12	11	10	8½	1842	3	3⅛	3⅛	3
1830	8	6	7	7	1843	3	3	3	3
1831	7	6½	7	7½	1844	3⅜	3⅜	3¾	3¾
1832	7½	7	7	7	1845	4¼	4	3¾	3¼
1833	7½	6¾	6½	7	1846	2⅛	2⅛	2¼	2¼
1834	7¼	7¼	7	6¾	1847	2⅝	2½	2¼	2
1835	7	6¾	6¾	6¾					

By a reference to the foregoing table, the fluctuating value of the paper currency will be seen. From the moment that government exonerated the bank from cash payment, the value of the currency, of course, began to decline; and with a very depreciated currency, it is no easy matter to conduct mercantile operations to any extent. In any country such a currency must be always below par; but here civil war, unstable governments, blockades, and revolutions, have so rapidly depreciated its value that it cannot fall much lower.

In January 1826, when the war with Brazil commenced, the exchange was at forty-five pence; in January 1827, at twenty pence; and in January 1828 and 1829, at twelve pence: thus bringing ruin upon all those who were engaged in commerce.

From the removal of the French blockade, down to the period of the late blockade, the exchange continued to improve; and there is no doubt that had peace continued, the exchange would at the present moment have shown a steady increase. The Anglo-French intervention compelled the government to issue a very large amount of paper; but were peace established, the exchanges would doubtless begin to advance. The balance of trade is greatly in favour of the country. The rates of exchange are not brought down to a later period than 1847; blockades and civil war have so un-

settled commerce, as to render the exchanges more accidental than natural.

In unsettled times, owing to the fluctuations of the currency, every merchant is obliged to base his operations upon the principle of barter; and as in selling goods he cannot foresee at what price he may be able to obtain bills of exchange, he compares the price of produce in Europe with that in his own market, and is thus enabled to form an accurate idea of the exchange which a remittance in produce would yield. Many are in this way compelled by necessity to make returns in produce; especially if any sudden depreciation takes place in the rate of exchange. The value of the currency is very little influenced, in the long run, by the ordinary political agitation in the country; nor is its value very much influenced by rumours respecting the stability or instability of government: its value is determined chiefly by the demand; which, after all, resolves itself, like all other mercantile operations, into a question of supply and demand. Local business transactions during any given period may require ten millions to facilitate exchanges; but if for another similar period of time, fifteen millions are required, then the value of the dollar must increase: unless in the mean time there be an issue equivalent to this increased demand. The cause, therefore, that operates to enhance the value of the currency, is principally an increase in the

demand for native produce, which must be paid for in currency; when, therefore, great numbers are seeking produce, great numbers must also be looking for currency to pay for such produce; hence the proximate cause of its increased value.

Many transactions are made payable in specie; but this is the result of mutual agreement and convenience. All contracts made in specie are payable by law in currency, the value of which is determined by the brokers; neither gold nor silver, therefore, necessarily enter into circulation. The export of the precious metals is forbidden, whether in bullion or coin; they can, however be re-exported within six months after importation, for which purpose permits are granted at the custom-house to the importer: these documents are negotiable.

The currency of all the provinces is metallic, Buenos Ayres excepted. Corrientes made an attempt at a paper currency, its first issue being guaranteed by wealthy citizens; its second issue, however, was without guarantee, and of course at a considerable discount: a return to specie, however, is likely.

The circulating medium of Monte Video is gold, silver, and copper. The stamped gold doubloon is value for sixteen patacones or hard dollars, and is subdivided into one-half, one-fourth, one-eighth, and one-sixteenth pieces: namely, pure gold coins.

Of the silver coins the lowest is the

Spanish	$\frac{1}{16}$	dollar	equal to 3	vintens or	60 reis.
„	$\frac{1}{8}$	„	6	„	120 „
„	$\frac{1}{4}$	„	12	„	240 „
„	$\frac{1}{2}$	„	24	„	480 „
„	dollar	„	48	„	960 „

The Brazilian patacone is also in circulation, thus :— the lowest is the

Brazilian	$\frac{1}{6}$	patacon,	equal to 8	vintens or	160 reis.
„	$\frac{1}{3}$	„	16	„	320 „
„	$\frac{2}{3}$	„	32	„	640 „
„	patacon	„	48	„	960 „

When Monte Video was a Spanish colony, the circulating medium consisted of Spanish coins ; but on the Portuguese getting possession they sought to assimilate the currency to their own. To simplify this operation, it was decided that the Brazilian patacone should be current at twenty per cent. higher value than the Spanish dollar; thus, five patacones were value for six Spanish dollars: all accounts, however, continued to be kept as they had been previously. Afterwards, the country became an independent republic ; but there being neither national coin, nor mint, the circulating medium remained as fixed by the Brazilians, and the mode of keeping accounts continued as under the Spanish government. There is now, therefore, in circulation what is called the Monte Video currency dollar, which is of equal value with Spanish dollars, without columns; also the French and North Ame-

rican dollars. There are likewise in circulation (being twenty per cent. more valuable than those already named) the Spanish dollars with columns, the dollars of the Spanish American Republics, and the Brazilian and Portuguese patacones. The dollars denominated the Monte Video currency have nearly disappeared, and at present they form but a fractional part of the circulating medium; merchants are therefore found keeping their accounts in a fictitious currency. When the rate of exchange is quoted, it has reference to the currency dollar.

British merchants form a very influential portion of the most respectable class of the community; their honourable principles and enlightened views being incentives to those who appreciate the value of high mercantile character, and a salutary check on their opposites. A superior class of young men have lately come out from England as clerks, who must eventually become valuable auxiliaries to the mercantile interest of the country.

Both in the city and in the province of Buenos Ayres, British settlers are prosperous. Whether as merchants or estancieros, as artisans or as labourers, immigrants are well received, and the prospect of reward to British capital and industry is most favourable.

In stating this I do not rely on my own observa-

tion and experience only; as, in order to satisfy myself on this head, I addressed letters to the Rev. Dr. W. Brown, minister of the Scotch Church, and to the Rev. A. D. Fahy, chaplain to the Irish Roman Catholics, from whom I received the following replies. The clergyman of the English Church having only recently arrived in the country, I did not apply to him.

Letter from the Rev. W. Brown, D.D.

Buenos Ayres, 2nd February, 1848.

Dear Sir,—My experience has reference almost exclusively to the Scotch community, and the circumstances in which most of those composing it came to this country perhaps scarcely warrants their case to be taken as an example of the conditition of emigrants in general. They came not in the character of mere adventurers, but under special engagements, and consequently enjoyed comforts and advantages on their arrival, and facilities in forming settlements, not to be looked for by such as emigrate on their own account, and at their own risk.

This province presents two separate fields to the enterprise and industry of labourers, viz., the occupation of the country, and the pursuits of handicraft in the city. In reference to the former it must be kept in view that the territorial extent of the

province, and the scantiness of the native population, are not the measure of the demand for foreign labour. Comparatively few hands suffice for the performance of pastoral work; and the habits of the natives, and the economical terms on which their services can be procured, give them, generally speaking, a preference in most rural employments. Agriculture is still very limited and very rude; and in the districts where it is protected, therefore, affords ample scope for foreign activity and skill. The principal way, however, in which our countrymen can exercise their industry to most advantage, is in the management and occupancy of dairy and sheep farms. Steady families of good character can easily procure situations of this description. A small amount of savings expended in the purchase of stock, secures an easy and abundant maintenance, and, though land is every day becoming more difficult to procure in the neighbourhood of the city, it may always be rented on comparatively moderate terms at a greater distance.

The demand for artisans is in a great measure confined to the city, and from the number of all nations already here, is perhaps limited. But within the limits set by the population — a limit necessarily and rapidly widening — the spirit and taste of the natives always guarantee abundant employment and ample remuneration to good workmen.

There is no restriction on the exercise of foreign industry, except what naturally springs from the state of society, and the nature and number of its wants.

All fiscal and municipal regulations have equal reference to natives and foreigners. All industrial pursuits are open to natives and foreigners alike.

Difference of religious belief opposes no impediment to the exercise of industry in any branch of business, either in town or country. There is no law against the acquisition and holding of heritable property by foreigners, and British subjects besides have the right secured to them by treaty of disposing of their property of every description by will or testament, as they may judge fit.

Reviewing the last twenty years, during which I have resided in this country, in reference to the condition of the labouring class of British residents, these facts prominently appear:—Amidst the political convulsions which have occurred in the course of that period, artisans and farmers have been exempted from all demands on their time or property such as natives have been subjected to, and have been enabled to prosecute their calling without any other interruption than inevitably and naturally resulted from the casual circumstances of society.

Many who landed here in the condition of me-

chanics, farm-servants, and labourers, have acquired considerable property, are now moving in spheres of influence and usefulness, and living in the enjoyment of competence and independence.

I may add—what I consider a very decisive proof of the natural abundance of this country, of the scope it affords for labour, and of the general comfort and prosperity of our countrymen—that till very recently the necessity of a regular provision for the destitute was not felt, and that though we have now made a congregational arrangement for the relief of poverty, and the gratuitous education of the children of parents in necessitous circumstances, the extent to which this exercise of charity is required is very limited.—I am, dear sir, yours very truly,

Wm. Brown.

Wm. Mac Cann, Esq.

Letter from the Rev. A. D. Fahy.

Buenos Ayres, 1st February, 1848.

Dear Sir, — I have been favoured with your letter of the 28th ultimo, in which you state that you have been travelling through this and the adjoining provinces with a view of acquiring solid information regarding these countries; and that while on your journey you frequently came in contact with British subjects, two-thirds of whom were

from Ireland; you now wish to know from me whether the labouring classes find employment in this province, and also if they enjoy the protection of the laws in their persons and pursuits.

In reply to these questions I beg leave to state, for the five years that I have been in, and travelling through this province, I have never met a man that could not find employment, unless during a portion of the blockade. In fact, there is such a scarcity of labourers that wages have often risen from five shillings to seven and sixpence per day. I have often known poor men to make one hundred pounds a year each, in making ditches alone. In a country like this, where there are no stones, a large number of labourers must always find employment at work of that kind, especially when the estancieros will begin to surround their houses with chacras and quintas. In addition to this, consider the vast number that will be required in saladeros, where the slaughtering of cattle is carried on to such an extent. I suppose there are upwards of two million head of cattle killed every year in the province of Buenos Ayres alone. The herding of sheep also will give employment to a large number of hands.

When once peace is established, the resources of this province will begin to be developed, and if sober and industrious labourers could be introduced, I

have no doubt that in a few years this province would become a perfect paradise.

In answer to your second question, whether British subjects enjoy the protection of the laws in their persons and pursuits, I answer distinctly in the affirmative. I have never met any British subject that was not most grateful to the government of Buenos Ayres for the protection they enjoyed. Of course, at a distance from the seat of government many crimes will be committed which the most vigilant eye cannot detect, and for which the government can be no more responsible than the Lord Lieutenant for the crimes that are committed in the distant parts of Ireland. I must add, also, that the respect which British subjects pay to the government and laws of the country, makes them more acceptable to the natives than those of any other country.

These assertions may appear strange in England, where there has been so much misrepresentation with regard to the state of this country; but when the heat of party feeling shall subside, I am sure my evidence will be supported by every impartial mind.

As you have travelled through this as well as many of the other provinces of the Argentine Confederation, I hope your testimony of its real state will remove many of the misrepresentations which interested parties have taken so much trouble to

circulate. Wishing you a safe return to Europe, I am, dear sir, your obedient servant,

ANTHONY D. FAHY,
Chaplain to the Irish Roman Catholics.

Wm. Mac Cann, Esq.,
12, Calle de la Universadad.

CHAPTER XII.

Religious establishments of the Roman Catholics—A state church beggared by the temporal power—Government the head of the Church in South America—Parish priests paid by the State, and by fees and gifts—Friars and nuns—Established religion of the country—Decay of the Jesuit College—Low but improving state of education—Schools in Buenos Ayres kept by foreigners on sufferance—Cathedral of Buenos Ayres—Holy week as celebrated by the ecclesiastics—Public procession of images of Christ, the Virgin, &c., on Monday—Preparations on the following days for Holy Thursday—Exhibition of images of Christ, the Virgin, and saints, in the streets—Public pulpits for the laity—Procession on Friday night by lamp-light—Striking scene on Saturday at noon to commemorate the Ascension—Burning of Judas Iscariot in effigy—Indulgences offered for attending processions—Mendicant monks—Polite behaviour and good humour of the people—Costly preparations of the ladies for costumes to wear on Holy Thursday—High mass at the cathedral—Display before the altar—The ladies and their dresses—Contrast of South American and English beauty—Procession of the bishop and clergy.

The religious establishments of the Roman Catholic Church in the city of Buenos Ayres were originally

on a scale of great magnitude, and must have covered at least thirty English acres; but the revenues of the Church, like those of the State, have become absorbed by the demands for carrying on expensive wars, and the traveller visiting Buenos Ayres is astonished at beholding magnificent churches, and other ecclesiastical edifices, utterly neglected and falling into ruin.

The spectacle of a state church beggared by the temporal power, on which it depended for support, is strikingly exhibited in the Argentine Provinces; for, unlike most Catholic countries, the South American colonies of Spain were excluded from the government of the Holy See. Ferdinand, jealous for the introduction of Papal power into the new world, obtained from Pope Alexander VI. a grant to the crown of Spain of the tithes in all newly discovered countries, on condition of the Crown making provision for the religious instruction of the people; and Julius II. soon afterwards conferred on the sovereign of Spain the absolute disposal of all ecclesiastical benefices in the new world. The Spanish monarch thus became head of the American Catholic Church, and his nomination of ecclesiastics to vacant benefices was, as a matter of course, confirmed by the Pope. The king's name alone was heard of; his authority was absolute, and no foreign spiritual power was allowed to intervene: even Papal Bulls were not

admitted, until they had been approved of by the council of the Indies; and if any bull should be introduced and circulated in America without obtaining that approbation, ecclesiastics were required not only to prevent it taking effect, but to seize all the copies and deliver them to the civil authority. Such was the basis upon which the Church was planted in the Spanish American colonies.

The greater part of the ecclesiastics were what are termed the regular clergy (monks and friars); and to stimulate their pious zeal, the Popes permitted missionaries of the four mendicant orders to accept of parochial charges, to perform all spiritual functions, and to receive the tithes and other emoluments of the benefice, without depending on the jurisdiction of the bishop of the diocese, or being subject to his censures.

When these countries proclaimed their independence, the Church patronage of the Crown was transferred to the local governments of the various provinces; and thus General Rosas at last became the head of the Argentine Catholic Church. In the earliest legislative acts of the House of Assembly, we can discover that a strong desire was manifested to lessen the influence of the clergy; not only because of the irregular lives of the friars but because the hierarchy were loyal to the Crown, and opposed to the patriots. The first General Assembly met in Buenos Ayres in January 1813, and on the 24th

of March, a decree was issued abolishing the Inquisition in all the provinces. Early in June the provinces were declared independent of all ecclesiastical authority; and the Pope's nuncio in Spain was declared to have no authority in the Argentine Republic. On the 28th of June, a vicar-general was appointed, and other officers, to have the direction of ecclesiastical affairs. The spirit which manifested itself in these and other laws of a similar tendency, has prevailed until it finally destroyed the framework of the Church. Under the government of Rivadaria, all orders of friars were suppressed; but they were restored to their ecclesiastical standing by the government of Rosas, and have received some small portions of their property. At present the government pays each parish priest a small and insufficient stipend for the celebration of public worship; the clergy, whether regular or secular, being mainly indebted for their maintenance, to the fees and other voluntary offerings of the people, when administering the offices of the Church.

No provision is made for educating a priesthood. Candidates for holy orders are taught Latin and moral philosophy by some of the friars in their cells; but it is a poor apology for education. The office of the priesthood is chiefly filled by ordained men from old Spain. General Rosas in the early part of his career patronized the Jesuits, intending that they

should make education the field of their labours; but they subsequently came under the censure of the authorities, and by a decree dated 22nd March, 1843, they were expelled, upon eight days' notice, from the province of Buenos Ayres. Since that period the other provinces have followed the example, and in March 1848, the Jesuits were expelled from Cordova.

There is but one bishop in the entire republic. The Franciscan and Dominican friars in the city of Buenos Ayres number about one hundred and twenty each, and from amongst them probably twenty-five to thirty have received holy orders. The Recolects, who have charge of the hospitals and churchyards (a branch of the Franciscans), are very few in number, and derive their income from the fees for performing funeral rites, and for the prayers they offer for the repose of souls.

There are two nunneries, one the order of St, Catherine, or the Dominicanesses, which is absolutely strict: when once a nun takes the vows, her intercourse with the world ceases for ever. The other is of the order of St. Clara, the sisterhood commonly known as the "Poor Clares," maintained by public charity. A bell-tower is attached to their building; and when they happen to be in want, they toll this bell till the pious and faithful hasten to supply their need. There is also a "house of public spiritual exercises", where the pious may

take up a temporary residence, and submit themselves to voluntary mortifications and penances. Those under ecclesiastical censure are also received here; and a course of sermons is preached quarterly, candidates for admission to which are required to present a certificate from their parish priest.

Although the political institutions of the country have appropriated much of the property of the Church, it is not to be inferred that the people or the government are estranged from the established religion. In a country of such immense extent, and with so scanty a population, the people cannot be easily brought under pastoral supervision; and there are multitudes who have no opportunity of uniting in public worship, unless they travel a distance of forty to a hundred miles. But even amongst the most solitary and isolated people I seldom entered a house without observing an image of their patron saint; usually enclosed in a glass case, and more or less gorgeously bedecked, according to the wealth of the owner.

When the country was under the Spanish monarchy, the Jesuits had the charge of education, and they maintained a church and collegiate institution in the heart of the city which could accommodate a thousand students. The decay of this institution must be dated from the fall of the Jesuits in 1768. Although the church is yet in good preservation,

the college and other buildings are rapidly falling into ruin.

The government has made no provision for national education; the university having little more than a merely nominal existence: it scarcely maintains two professors, under whom candidates graduate for law and medicine. The Buenos Ayreans are, however, alive to the necessity and importance of education; and, from inquiries, I am glad to learn that the next generation will probably be much better educated than the previous; for although the higher branches of study are not much cultivated, education is more generally diffused.

No class at present derives greater comparative advantage from the influence of education, than young women of the upper classes in society, whose instruction was formerly so limited as to be undeserving the name of mental culture: the education of the rising generation of the female sex includes a much wider field of knowledge than formerly. This improvement is mainly owing to the number of foreigners who have established private seminaries in Buenos Ayres. There are five boarding and day schools, conducted by European ladies and gentlemen; these establishments, however, exist only by the sufferance of the government, and are liable at any moment to be closed.

In the college formerly belonging to the Jesuits, an educational institution has been revived. The

government has granted the use of the building, provided the sons of certain officers in the army are educated gratis. This institution is similar in its literary character and general management to Carlow College in Ireland.

The cathedral is a large cruciform brick building, originally of Moorish style, and still unfinished; the front, facing the Plaza Victoria, consists of a modern-built Corinthian portico of twelve columns, supporting a well-proportioned pediment; and the edifice is crowned with a large dome, which looks poor and naked in consequence of the smallness of the mouldings. The beauty of the interior is enhanced by its contrast with the outside. The floor is paved with black and white marble, and the arched roof is supported by massive square pillars with gilded capitals, which separate the aisles from the nave. Two richly carved and gilded pulpits having light and elegant canopies are attached to the piers east of the dome; the entrance to them being by means of stairs in the nterior of each pier. The high altar is on a magnificent scale; it reaches from the floor to the roof, is beautifully carved, gorgeously painted and gilded, and adorned with paintings. On a raised platform stands the bishop's throne, and on the opposite side is the chair for the governor. The *coup d'œil*, when the whole is brilliantly illuminated, is magical. At the end of the nave is a private

altar called the Divine Shepherdess, on which is the figure of a shepherdess surrounded by her flocks. On either side is a richly-carved marble font for holy water; and near the door is the baptismal font, the basin being protected by a pierced covering of about two feet high, having doors kept locked according to the practice of the middle ages. The number of side-chapels or altars is thirteen; of which six are privately endowed, the chaplain being paid an annual stipend for celebrating masses for the souls of the donor, his family and friends, whether living or dead. The sacristy, lavatory, and chapter-house, are handsomely fitted up with marble tables; and the priests' vestments and the consecrated vessels are rich and costly.

Holy Week is observed with especial sanctity in Buenos Ayres: every day has its particular pageant and ceremonies; while religious shows are met with on every side.

Passing down one of the streets on Monday evening during the last week of Lent, I observed some people assembling near Merced church, and entering it I beheld three figures, nearly as large as life, elevated on platforms, and surmounted by canopies adorned with tinsel and artificial flowers. One near the door represented the Virgin in white robes, holding a chalice in one hand, and a book in the other; in the centre of the nave was a figure of Christ being scourged; near the altar was the

image of a female saint. Along the sides of the nave, women, mostly of the poorer class, were reclining or kneeling on slips of carpet; some with prayer-books, others with beads; but all engaged in devotion : the object that most attracted their attention being the figure of Christ. Monks, novitiate nuns, and attendant boys, moved about, as if busily employed.

Musicians, with violins and other instruments, now entered the church from a door near the altar, followed by monks and other ecclesiastics, in their richest robes. The people then raised the images on their shoulders, the violins were played, and the procession advanced up the nave to the west door; on entering the street it was joined by an officer's guard, and paraded the city, two bands of music playing at intervals. Around the figures were men and boys carrying lighted candles and burning lamps fastened to lofty poles. At stated intervals the music ceased, the procession halted, and monks appointed for the purpose chanted with loud but harmonious voices. Two or more attendants, each carrying a large crucifix, received the offerings of the faithful, which were chiefly copper coins of small value. In consequence of a few drops of rain, the usual streets were not perambulated, and the procession returned to the church.

Tuesday and Wednesday were days observed in

all the churches. Priests with their attendants were busily occupied in preparing platforms, canopies, and all the accessories necessary to an imposing display of Roman Catholic ceremonials. The Franciscan church presented an impressive scene: the building, with its lofty dome and massive pillars, spacious nave and long and gloomy aisles, excited feelings of awe and reverence suited to the occasion. Priests at the high altar in the distance were engaged in various ceremonies; while monks, in the sober garb of their order, moved silently around. Nearly all the worshippers were women, whose subdued accents, while devoutly repeating their prayers, produced an unearthly sound.

On Holy Thursday the city was perfectly noiseless, the police having given orders that all business should cease from Wednesday night to Saturday morning. Families, therefore, had previously to supply themselves with necessaries, as neither carts nor horsemen dare appear in the streets. Even the church bells were not tolled.

At this festival there is much rivalry among the ecclesiastics in ornamenting their churches and images. About twenty of the latter were decorated and placed in the open air, on pedestals four or five feet high; around them were men, women, and children, on their knees, repeating aves or telling their beads. Before retiring, the worshippers approached the figure, and bent the knee, kissing

some tassel hanging from the robes; and occasionally men and boys were heard begging money for their favourite saint: they collected considerable sums, although each person may give only a few coppers.

Under the portico of the Cabildo, which was decorated with drapery, carpeting, and flowering shrubs, were two figures of Christ and the Virgin; Christ being represented with emaciated countenance, wearing a crimson robe and crown of thorns, and bearing a cross on his shoulders; the Virgin wearing a tiara of tinsel, a muslin shawl, and black velvet cloak trimmed with broad gold lace. Near the Jesuits' church, was another image of Christ similarly arrayed; and on the opposite side of the street was a raised cross, ten feet high, painted black, with ropes of worsted hanging from the top, and a ladder by its side. In another street was the figure of a negress,* attired in white robes, decked with gold and silver lace and trinkets, holding in her arms a white baby. In the vestibule of the college church, was the image of a saint, dressed in a jacket and petticoats, with a small violin or kit hanging from her girdle, probably meant for Saint Cecilia.

At night the town was all alive: streams of people were passing to and from the churches; the images

* Some of the early pictures of the Virgin Mary represent her with a dark complexion.

in the open air were lighted up with lamps and candles, and surrounded with groups of devout women and children on their knees. Pulpits had been erected in some parts of the town, into which the piously disposed might enter, for the purpose of reading aloud passages from the Missal for the edification of the assemblage.

On Friday night, a long procession slowly advanced from the front of the Merced church, across the Plaza Victoria, attended by a large concourse of people; the procession being distinguished by the image of a female in deep mourning, under a richly-ornamented canopy, borne on men's shoulders, and followed by a military band and an officer's guard of foot soldiers; the people, as before, bearing lighted candles, wax tapers, and lamps. The light of numerous lamps in the open air, the sounds of instrumental music, and of the vesper hymn chanted by monks, had a very striking effect. Upon another occasion a procession with images moved round the Franciscan church, the streets being thickly covered with wild fennel, which emits, when pressed, an agreeable odour; while incense from burning censers sent forth clouds of fragrant perfumes.

On Saturday at noon, Christ was represented as ascending from the tomb. The city, which a moment before was silent as death, resounded with rejoicing: bells rang forth merry peals; fireworks

exploded, and private and public bands of music struck up in every quarter.

At night the streets were all life and gaiety: in some places the people amused themselves by burning effigies of Judas Iscariot; and, in the Alameda, a large gallows was erected, from which hung a colossal figure of the betrayer, with tar barrels burning around; the effigy was filled with fire works, which, from time to time, exploded, while rockets illumined the scene and amused the shouting crowd.

Negroes and mulattoes were generally employed in attendance at these ceremonies. The respectable classes did not seem to take much interest in them; although some of the processions were numerously attended. Handbills posted on the churches, promised ten indulgences for forty days to all who would take a part in the public services: a handsome bribe certainly for carrying lighted candles in a procession!

Miniature images of wax, in small glass cases, were borne through the streets, by those who solicited alms from the faithful on behalf of the saint; and the donor of a few copper rials was permitted to kiss the image. Others were taken to the houses of wealthy inhabitants, to receive their offerings for the support of "Holy Mother Church." It must have been a fatiguing time for the clergy. I frequently visited the churches, and observed that

they were always engaged in some fresh display; the curtains around the altar, tables, chairs, candlesticks, reading-desks, and all the church furniture, being continually changed so as to attract the eyes of gazers; and all the churches were open from an early hour in the morning to a late hour at night. Nothing could exceed the good order and pleasing demeanour of the entire population: no assemblages of people could be more completely under the influence of politeness and good humour: from the humblest negro to the haughty Spanish grandee the same kindly spirit pervaded all ranks and classes.

The expensive dresses of those in the humbler walks of life astonished me; and I am within bounds in calculating that each adult must, on an average, pay at least five pounds per annum for British manufactures: the more substantial portions of the ladies' dresses were of English texture, but the fanciful and ornamental fabrics were French. The ladies are extremely fond of dress, and so absorbed were they with preparations, that little else was talked of for weeks previously but the splendour with which they intended to appear at the celebration of the coming festival: several sent to Europe for dresses that cost from fifty to one hundred pounds each.

The scene in the cathedral was most imposing. I entered by a door that opened into the

west end of the nave. The floor was carpeted, and a double row of chairs extended along the sides of the nave the entire way to the altar. A raised platform, a few feet in height, projected some distance in front of the grand altar, like a stage, upon which the rites and ceremonies were performed, so as to be seen distinctly by all. On this a temporary altar, richly decorated, was erected; a black curtain with a red cross in the centre, hung from the ceiling, separating it from the high altar. From the capitals of the massive pillars depended tattered ensigns, trophies of victory. Appropriate paintings were judiciously placed around the walls, and the side-altars were ornamented with images of the saints richly bedecked.

All the civil authorities, and those of the military who are obliged to attend *ex officio*, were seated on chairs along the nave. The floor of the cathedral appeared to be the common property of all classes: there was no distinction of rank; all commingled with ease and decorum: the humble negro knelt by the side of the proud patrician, and the mistress and maid offered their devotions side by side.

The ladies slowly and gracefully entered by the spacious doorway, followed by attendants bearing richly-fringed carpets; upon reaching the centre of the nave, or some unoccupied spot, they selected a place and motioned to their attendants, who spread

the carpeting on which they knelt; then having crossed themselves devoutly, they enjoyed the refreshing influence of the fan. When their devotions were concluded they resumed a reclining position, care being taken so to adjust their dress that a pretty foot and ankle might not peep from beneath folds of drapery. The nave soon became filled with worshippers, and gradually the increasing numbers spread themselves throughout the aisles, and around the side-altars. The men, with few exceptions, were not devoutly disposed, but loitered about looking on merely as spectators, or admiring some of the finest women of the country assembled here in their most gorgeous attire. The costumes were magnificent: mantillas of the finest lace were worn over the head and shoulders; dresses of velvet, satin, or blonde, trimmed with gold and silver, seemed to prevail: some wore dresses of black blonde, over a violet-coloured satin petticoat, which had a beautiful effect. Diamonds and ornaments of jewellery were confined to the wealthy few.

Of the personal charms of the ladies much cannot be said; for in this climate youth soon loses its bloom, and, from the admixture of different races, there is a want of character in their style of beauty. Their figures, however, are extremely graceful, and they move with bewitching ease and elegance. Bonnets never being worn, the

eye takes in the tournure of the head and the whole figure; while the fascinating influence of their air and manner is felt by the most stern spectator. Up to a certain age the charms of the maidens are enhanced by gentle and delicate features, illumined with the sunny gaiety and joyous feelings of youth. The term loveliness, however—that magic word which comprehends the whole of woman's captivating powers—cannot be applied to them; nor is the lofty beauty and dignified reserve of English womanhood to be found here. Perhaps in the north of Europe alone, are to be seen those perfect specimens of female beauty, where youthful bloom and freshness, symmetry of form and loveliness of feature, combine to charm the eye and elicit the homage of the heart. In some of the family groups were to be seen girls from sixteen to twenty possessing many attractions; there is a delicacy of outline in their rounded yet slender figures, and an expression of calm susceptibility in their artless countenances, while recognizing their friends, or pacing along the aisles, which was exceedingly attractive.

The priests and their attendants were dressed in white robes ornamented with gold and silver lace, some with uncovered heads, while others wore mitre-shaped caps. The dim and fitful light of burning lamps, the clouds of fragrant incense, through which were faintly seen the priests and acolytes engaged

in these rites, gave to the scene around the altar a mysterious character, impressive to the senses of the multitude.

Well-dressed youths of the better classes moved through the assembly, each bearing a box filled with lighted candles; from which any so disposed took one and carried it towards the altar. There, amidst the waving of censers and the chanting of a funeral requiem, a procession was formed. Boys bearing lighted torches preceded a priest holding erect a massive silver crucifix, supported on each side by acolytes with lighted wax tapers in silver candlesticks; then came a priest bearing a white flag, followed by the clergy and as many laity as chose, all carrying lighted tapers; a large silver crucifix being borne aloft in the midst. The bishop next appeared, wearing the mitre, and holding his crozier; a silken canopy with poles of silver, being borne over him by priests, while acolytes in white robes swung censers of burning incense, throwing a fragrant cloud around the venerable ecclesiastic.

The procession, accompanied by instrumental music and the chanting of the choir, moved round the church, and returned to the altar; when the civil and military authorities retired and walked in procession through the city, visiting several churches where mass was being celebrated.

Thus terminated the ecclesiastical ceremonies of

Holy Week; and, however much the enlightened Christian of a Protestant church may be shocked at the spectacle of image-worship in its most gross and theatrical aspect, and lament the state of ignorance and credulity which admits of such a parade of idolatrous ceremonies, it is impossible to deny that the beholders, especially the lower classes and females of the upper class, were reverentially impressed. It may, therefore, be reasonably hoped that the growth of intelligence and the spread of education will prepare the people of these Provinces to receive the sublime truths of the Gospel, and the pure doctrines and simple worship of the reformed religion of Christianity.

CHAPTER XIII.

REMARKS ON CHRISTIAN MISSIONS TO THE HEATHEN.

Characteristics of savages—Aboriginal races becoming extinct —Probable effect of slave emancipation — The Jesuits in Paraguay—Labours of Elliot, Brainerd, and other missionaries in North America—Antagonism of strong and weak races — Ultimate extinction of the heathen — Effect of Christian missions—Moffatt, the missionary in Africa—Nature of religious influence—Spiritual destitution of emigrants— Their value as aids to missionaries.

Having from my youth upwards burned with a desire to see man in his native condition, free from the deformities as well as the elegances of civilized life, I visited the untutored heathen population, scattered throughout the extensive plains bordering the Argentine Republic, with the most lively feelings of interest.

At a first glance, civilization seems to have created an endless variety of wants, to supply which absorbs all the energies both of mind and body; it might, therefore, appear a reasonable inference that to

abolish luxury and purely artificial wants, would enable us to pass our days in tranquillity and repose. As regards the more barbarous races, I had hitherto believed that were truth in its purity presented to their minds, it would exercise a convincing power upon the understanding; and that when the habits of civilized life were presented to them they could not fail to admit their superiority, and speedily to adopt them. I must, however, now confess that these opinions, which I had long cherished and defended, have, during this journey, undergone a radical change.

Of the common origin of the entire human race I have no doubt; yet time and circumstances have produced such extraordinary contrasts in the different races of man that it requires an effort to believe that we have all sprung from the same parent stock. Many races, whose immediate origin is lost in remote antiquity, appear to have outlived nearly every vestige of mental vitality; possessing only craft and cunning—qualities more allied to instinct than to reason. To comprehend a single idea is the extent of their intellectual power: a complex idea is to them a mystery. We value ourselves when utility governs our habits, and the mind is expanded by the acquisition of knowledge; while for these very reasons savages despise us. We recommend them to increase the number of their wants; while the perfection of independent manhood, in their estimation, is

the fewness of those wants. We gratify our desires by a life of labour; but that labour is, in their opinion, self-inflicted torture. So long as savages entertain such notions, how slow must be their progress towards civilization! It is in vain to expatiate upon the value and importance of truth, as an abstract principle, whether of philosophy or religion: they seem unable to conceive any abstract idea.

Wandering as a race of men in what we may conceive to be their natural state, and living in a primitive manner; dwelling in tents made of the skins of beasts; their wealth consisting in flocks and herds; their family institutions permitting a plurality of wives; and the spoils of war consisting of cattle and female captives, who become their wives, concubines, or slaves; the state of society recorded in the Old Testament seems realized. Their religion is that which nature has suggested to their crude perceptions: they reverence the sun, and have some undefined veneration for a good spirit, and dread of an evil one. But in the progress of time they have lost all ideas of the Deity as transmitted to his posterity by Noah, or as he is revealed to man by other patriarchs; their language has never been written, nor do they know anything of religion unless by traditions, which have faded by the lapse of years. The Divine revelation of the Scriptures has never reached these savages: the glad tidings

of the Gospel have not been proclaimed to them.

When that portion of the globe called the new world was discovered, it was peopled by a numerous race, designated the heathen; and in looking around me at the present moment through the wide plains of the Argentine Republic, I ask, Where are the aborigines? Passing in fancy through the Brazils, and along the shores of the Atlantic into Mexico—from thence through the whole of North America—I again inquire, Where are the aborigines? "The greater part have become extinct, and the remainder are rapidly passing away:" such is the only answer which can be returned.

The native races that possessed the territory now called the United States, are disappearing so fast that one could almost fix the period when the last unit in the series shall be no more. The aborigines of the West Indies are absolutely forgotten; and if we cast our eyes upon the southern hemisphere, to look for the native races that once inhabited Van Diemen's Land, we find that they have all become extinct. The same fate awaits their brethren throughout the whole continent of Australasia. The next half of this century will probably witness the rapid extinction of the native races of New Zealand; and in the South Seas, the same destiny must ultimately close the history of those interesting islanders. In short, it needs no prophetic power to predict that a

day will come, when the hundreds of races, with their millions of people, that lived in the hemisphere which we designate the new world, shall have for ever disappeared, and their name and their language be forgotten. There is something sublime and mysterious in the contemplation of such a vast change, now actually taking place before our eyes: but who can doubt that the designs of Providence are being fulfilled, and that the boundless riches of the earth shall thus be developed and applied to benefit the great human family which has sprung from the Scandinavian and Celtic races.

The rapid extinction of the feeble races of the new world suggests the consideration, how far similar causes (without staying to inquire what these causes are) must produce similar effects in the old hemisphere. At the Cape of Good Hope, for instance—the only part of that continent where colonization has been attempted by British subjects for any lengthened period—we perceive the evidence of similar results: the natives have withered, while the northern races have flourished. And here an interesting question arises, as to the probable effect of slave emancipation upon the negroes of the free states in North America, and of the British colonies: in this part of the world they have gradually decreased since their emancipation, and within another century they will have altogether disappeared.

Upon the discovery of the new world, the Church of Rome, with the most laudable zeal, sought to extend the humanizing influence of Christianity amongst its inhabitants: she nobly advocated their cause against the cruel laws of the Spanish monarch, and finally established a most elaborate scheme for the conversion of the heathen. The control of that scheme was confided to the Jesuits, who selected the delightful country of Paraguay as the centre of their operations; and there for more than two centuries they pursued their missions: with what results we know. They succeeded to a great extent in preserving the natives from the baneful influence of the Spaniards and other Europeans. They had their own towns and villages, protected by their own guards; and their own estancias, herded by their converts: even European mechanics were excluded, as the Jesuits themselves taught the mechanic arts; and eventually the fine arts were cultivated. These inferior races were thus preserved from the contamination of bad example, and wandering savages were located and made familiar with the first step in civilization. So long as the mind of the strong race was present to guide them, all went on well; but no sooner were the Jesuits expelled the colony in 1768, than the frame-work of civilization began to dissolve. The Indians, left to themselves, or to inefficient pastors, withered away; and only evidences of the failure of that great experi-

ment are now to be found in the ruins of villages, towns, and churches—some, at Concepcion and elsewhere, on a scale of great magnificence—that once accommodated the Indian race.

At a later period, early in the 17th century, we have the history of Elliot, the Protestant missionary in North America, who reduced the native language to order, published a grammar and I believe translated the Scriptures into that language; but at the present moment there is not a vestige to be found of the tribes amongst whom he laboured: they have all become extinct. The history of the life of Brainerd is but a counterpart to that of Elliot: he toiled and laboured for years amongst tribes all of which have since disappeared. Had the object of these eminent men been exclusively to civilize the tribes, and save them from extinction by engrafting them upon the civilized races, their mission would have equally failed.

From the time that the Pilgrim Fathers sought to establish a theocratic government in New England down to the present period, the claims of the native tribes have not been neglected by Missionaries. Each denomination of Christians has had its own missionary organization; philanthropists have sought to reach them by means of education; and the governments have aided by their political influence; but all in vain: no permanent social good has resulted.

Cases may occur where some tribes have become less ferocious, and more docile, than before Christianity reached them; but, compared with their neighbours of European extraction, they are little better than savages still: they continue to maintain their distinctive character as aboriginal and nomadic tribes, and are not engrafted upon the body politic of states, as citizens. I am also informed, upon good authority, that a majority of the most enlightened and evangelical Christians of the United States, look upon their heathen neighbours as doomed to rapid extinction; as they cannot be engrafted upon civilized humanity. The Divine power of Christianity has been shown in its purifying influence upon the morals of savages; but here it seems to terminate: social progression has not followed upon conversion of the heathen, because they are incapable of intellectual advancement in any high sense of the term.

It may be inquired whether the different races do not amalgamate, and in this way become one people? Before I visited the heathen I was under the impression that amalgamation would follow the reception of Christianity, but I am convinced from observation that such is not the case; since each race, whether before or after its conversion, maintains its own distinctive character. Between the stronger and feebler races there appear to exist elements of repulsion, and principles of antagonism, of so subtle and incom-

prehensible a nature, that to amalgamate by marriage seems to be impossible. The final extinction of one is absolutely certain beneath the irresistible weight and force of the other.

This powerful instinct, combined with the high moral tone and lofty aim of the earlier settlers in New England, saved the United States from being peopled by a mixed, feeble, and degenerate race. To maintain this vantage ground as a pure and powerful people they must adhere to the same wise precautions. Nothing, however, can justify any people in enslaving a portion of their fellow-men, even while it may be highly expedient to avoid intercourse with them in the more intimate relations of life.

Probably mankind will be Christianized in a way neither desired nor expected by man; and, judging from the history of Christianity during eighteen hundred years, and from the nature of human progress during the present century, it is not too much to say that it will be accomplished, not in the conversion of the heathen upon any large scale, but by their gradual if not total extinction; the countries they inhabit becoming peopled by emigrants of Christian races.

Of the many movements in modern times actuated by a desire to promote the welfare and happiness of the human race, the philanthropic spirit that has of late years prevailed in Great Britain and the United States of North America, as shown in the extended and strenuous efforts made to promote

Christian missions to the heathen, stands out pre-eminently great and noble; free from selfish aims, as becomes labourers in so holy a cause. But to a devout and intelligent mind a survey of the heathen world, forbids sanguine expectations. There is but one refuge from the saddening and gloomy contemplations which it produces, and that is, in the wisdom and goodness of a beneficent Creator.

In the history of modern missions, one singular fact must arrest the attention of the commonest observer. The primary aim of the missionary is to Christianize the races amongst whom he labours, and to instruct them in the elements of social life, so that they may become a part of the civilized world. Strange, however, as it may appear, it is not less true that, in some important fields of Christian abour, the conversion of the heathen races to Christianity has been, though undesignedly, the first step to their rapid extinction. This singular and unexpected result has been shown at the Cape of Good Hope, in New Zealand, and the South Sea Islands; and may be discovered in other places.

In all human probability the aborigines of New Zealand might have continued for ages to enjoy possession of their fertile country had they not been visited by the British missionary. Christianity introduced civilization; order and industry produced property; these give birth to commerce; and finally the stronger race comes and takes possession

of the soil; nothing can then save the aborigines from final extinction. The South Sea Islands were first brought prominently before the Christian world by the success which attended the Protestant missionaries. This success attracted the French, who visited those islands, seeking a means of extending their own influence, and in doing so diffused the elements of final decay amongst the aborigines. The British missionary penetrated into South Africa, humanized the wandering Caffres, and produced tranquillity along the frontier. Under the influence of this peace, British-born subjects extended their borders, and encroached upon the Caffres; the latter became alarmed for their herds and pastures, and a sanguinary strife, which can only close with the triumph of the stronger race, was the result.

But a totally different aspect of missionary labour is about to develope itself in the missionary field occupied by Moffatt. He is placed in the interior of Africa, entirely isolated, and cut off from the contaminating influence of the mercenary trader, or the adventurous emigrant.

The career of this laborious and eminent man will be the history of a modern theocracy, if such could now have an existence; for those who bow to his influence will do so with such feelings as Manco Capac was revered in Peru. The power and position of Moffatt will be that of a king and a priest amongst his African converts: his

name alone will be most potential; for his successor can never gain the same influence, whatever may be his talents, unless he assume the same name. With God's blessing on the labours of Moffatt, Christianity will take root in the interior of Africa; industry and commerce will follow; both will create wealth; and civil institutions will then be required, the officers of which must, in the first instance at least, be church members. These Christian settlements will then become an object of plunder to their heathen neighbours; to protect the frontier an army must be raised; and the Christian soldier will make fresh conquests.

Assuming, therefore, that the territory is extended, it becomes a most important inquiry, How are the African neophytes to be supplied with Christian pastors? To plant Moffatt there, and not maintain him by suitable and necessary auxiliaries, would be absurd. The expansive principle of the enterprise must be maintained: assistant pastors and teachers must be trained from amongst the converts, or sent out from England. One objection to the latter course is, that it would incur too great an expense to be borne by the churches at home; and therefore an attempt may be made to find a substitute in native piety. It may therefore be well for a moment to investigate the possibility of such a scheme; though in attempting to do so, I am sensible of my temerity in dealing with that subject.

None can define the mode by which the Spirit of God operates on the human character: we see it in its results, but that is all. It gives the existing faculties of the mind a new direction, and confines the desires or passions within pure and hallowed bounds; but it does not implant any new mental power, although the original faculties are acted upon by such Divine influence. Upon this point I fear that much misapprehension exists, and that the results of what is termed conversion are too frequently over-rated, or misunderstood. Religion has necessarily but a limited range of influence over those whose capacities are limited: a man whose mind is naturally shallow will be shallow in his religious views; the man with mental defects will exhibit those defects in his religious character. A teacher whose mind is uncultivated cannot extend the range of his mental acquirements except by study; for religion cannot supply the want of education: an ignorant Christian can no more do full justice to a religious topic than he can to any mere intellectual theme.

Such are my conscientious convictions, and I feel bound to express them; though I do so with some hesitation, lest I should give rise to misapprehension: but it is the duty of every earnest man to declare his opinions in a matter of such importance. I entertain no hope of any plan having for its object the raising up of a native ministry; since the mental capacity of the negro can-

not extend beyond a very limited range; he is therefore disqualified for becoming the efficient expounder of Christian ethics, although he may be made useful, under a system of training, which can at most fit him for some very subordinate department. The great evil to be dreaded is the liability of such teachers to blend heathen and Christian dogmas, to the destruction of "pure and undefiled religion:" in this way early teachers, even in the days of the apostles, fell into lamentable errors. In whatever light, therefore, the labours of Moffatt may be regarded, his ultimate mission is beset with many and great impediments. It must, however, prove a most valuable experiment in the Christian church, as it will tend to show what can be done for the benighted Africans under such an organization. For myself, "I stand in doubt." Fifty years hence, if continued, it is likely to mould itself into all the evils of a modern theocracy, apart from the direct guidance of the Divine will.

In these latter days, unusual activity is displayed, both in the Christian churches and in the world of commerce. The energetic races of northern Europe appear determined to go forth and possess the earth. Their vigour stamped a character upon Europe at the fall of the Roman empire; and now, at a later period of history, they appear destined to exert a powerful and abiding influence upon the social condition of the entire human family. The zeal of

modern Christians has revived the spirit of MISSIONS, while the necessities and energies of the industrious classes have given birth to EMIGRATION. Under the influence of these two mighty movements, peaceful revolutions must take place amongst the different nations and languages of men; and powerful kingdoms of a new organization will be called into existence: even now the foundations of a new and vast empire are being widely and firmly laid in Australia.

Our solicitude may well be awakened for the spiritual well-being of so interesting a portion of the human family. More than one hundred thousand human beings annually leave the shores of the United Kingdom, most of whom are destined for some years probably to suffer many hardships; to provide food and raiment, must in the first instance absorb all their energies. For them to make suitable provision for spiritual instruction, must be for a considerable time impossible.

It is not easy to conceive of any merely savage race more worthy the sympathy of the Christian churches than those hitherto neglected or forgotten emigrants. Some may perchance be located where they form a village, but are unable to erect a place of worship; and pastoral oversight, perhaps valued and cherished at home, is there unknown: the marriage ceremony is deferred, or altogether neglected; children remain without baptism, and parents without public

worship. All this spiritual destitution may be the lot of our fellow countrymen even in a land where we supply the heathen with Bibles, with schools, and with missionaries!

Hitherto emigrants have been regarded by the missionary with alarm — not altogether without cause, perhaps—in consequence of the demoralizing influence which some might exert upon the native converts. But if more correct views were entertained of the moral agency which the missionary and the emigrant together could exert, the influence of both might be so combined as to work in perfect harmony. To accomplish this desirable end, the Christian world should be deeply impressed with the duty of influencing and instructing the thousands who emigrate, and that might, in this way, promote rather than obstruct the spread of Christianity.

Were pastors and teachers fully to estimate the power of the mighty engine thus placed in their hands by Providence, they would feel it an imperative duty to encourage pious and intelligent men to go out and strengthen, by their example and labours, the feeble and infant congregations planted both in our colonies and other distant lands: many would be induced, by their zeal for the religion of Christ, to swell the tide of emigration, and thus become active auxiliaries in the field of missionary labour.

It is a recorded fact that considerably more than 300,000*l.* sterling are annually raised by voluntary

contributions in the United Kingdom for the purpose of converting the heathen to Christianity. Large as the sum appears, I could wish it were much greater; the mode of its application, however, becomes a question of immense magnitude and importance.

The power and permanency of the race, and its position and opportunities for exercising influence over other races, are points deserving more consideration than they have hitherto received in relation to missionary efforts. If the emigrant were to become the ally of the missionary, the stream of emigration might fertilize and refresh the heathen desert. Without losing sight of the native races, whose existence may be ephemeral, missions would thus most effectually implant the truths of the Gospel in distant lands by simultaneously influencing European settlers.

In readjusting the mode of conducting missionary operations, it would appear to be more in accordance with the general tendency of events, and the exigencies of the case, to follow the emigrant and the trader, and to make the land of their abode the centre of Christian operations. Let us suppose that a colony becomes located in South Africa: supply that colony with a missionary and his auxiliaries; make it incumbent on them to embrace within the range of their operations the heathen that frequent their neighbourhood; and, instead of inducing them to continue in their own isolated position, gradually induct them into the usages of their Christian neighbours;

and thus, if possible, ultimately blend them with the general civilization of modern times. In acting upon some plan of this kind, Christian churches would discharge a double duty, following the emigrant with the Gospel, and at the same time soliciting the heathen to benefit by its maxims.

From the preceding remarks I must not be understood as entertaining views of Christian missions unworthy of their Divine origin and tendency: they apply exclusively to social aspects and influences. Christianity contains no element of weakness or of discord: on the contrary, it breathes peace and good will towards men; yet from the nature of the human agency by which it is necessarily introduced amongst savages, and more especially on account of the usages of civilized life which follow in its train, it becomes the occasion —not the cause—of those results to which reference has been made.

No doubt it is a wise ordination of Providence that while immediate and spiritual good is conferred upon the weaker races who embrace the gospel, they are not exempted from the general law which dooms them to extinction, and to give place to races of a superior order of mind with which they come into contact. Although the ambitious aims and selfish policy of the stronger races may precipitate the ultimate result, it is, perhaps, enough for us to know, that while such a

process is going forward, influences that shall outlast the revolutions of time, have been exerted upon the very races eventually doomed to be swept away from the face of the earth.

CHAPTER XIV.

ON BREEDING SHEEP IN BUENOS AYRES, AND ON THE MANAGEMENT OF AN ESTANCIA, OR CATTLE-FARM.

[For the information contained in the following pages, on the subject of sheep-breeding, I am indebted to Mr. John Harratt, of Buenos Ayres; and for that on the management of an estancia, to Don Patricio Lynch.]

The climate of Buenos Ayres is favourable for breeding sheep; the cold in winter never being so intense as to require the sheep to be housed. No snow falls on this side the Cierra del Tandil; nor is any food required to be provided for the sheep in winter: they can feed all the year in the open country. It is not necessary at any season to take them off the land in search of food, as in Australia; nor are they subject to any loss by storms, except from neglect or mismanagement. The land of this province is very fertile, generally

presenting a vast sea of verdure. The parts which have been longest occupied are the best adapted for sheep, while the new lands are preferable for the breeding of cattle. The Pampas between Buenos Ayres and the river Salado, to the south, are the best lands at present occupied by sheep; and from which they are driving the horned cattle. If the country were properly provided with roads and bridges, superior land for sheep-breeding would probably be found a little north of the Cierras, which extend from Cape Corrientes to Tapalqueèn.

A league of land will feed from twelve to fourteen thousand sheep, without any necessity of storing food, or removing them from the land during the worst seasons; in good seasons it would feed fifty thousand. At twenty leagues from the city to the south, a league of good land is worth from fifty to sixty thousand current dollars (equal to about five hundred pounds sterling, at twopence exchange) for nine square geographical miles, or about six thousand acres; to the south of the Salado it is worth about half that amount. Of course the value of land varies according to its quality and locality. High lands are indispensable for sheep: upon low marshy lands they will not thrive; although it is desirable to have some low lands in a sheep farm for summer pasture. The objection to land which has been long grazed and perhaps over stocked, is the production of carritella,

or small burr, so detrimental to the wool; although the sheep feed and fatten upon it. This plant seldom lasts more than two or three months, during summer, and may be in a great measure avoided by keeping the sheep for the time in low lands, where the burr does not grow. The country is occasionally subject to droughts during summer, when it becomes necessary to draw water; which is found so near the surface, and in such abundance, that one man can draw sufficient for a flock of two thousand sheep in an hour.

The introduction of sheep into this part of America appears to have been in the year 1548, when Nuflo de Chaves brought a few sheep from Peru to Paraguay; these probably perished during the frequent disturbances of that period. The stock from which all the sheep of this province have descended, was introduced in the year 1590, by Juan Torres de Vera and Arragon, who, to fulfil an obligation entered into by his father-in-law, Juan Ortiz de Tarate, brought four thousand sheep from the Charces, which were divided between the provinces of Buenos Ayres, Santa Fé, and Corrientes, and added greatly to their prosperity.

The flocks then introduced must have been the Churra breed of Spain, with a slight mixture of a better one, probably mestizos. Spain was always jealous of her merinos, and strictly prohibited their exportation, even to her own colonies; upon the

same restrictive principle she also prohibited the cultivation of the vine there. So lately as twenty-five or thirty years ago, a few sheep with fine wool were found amongst the common sheep of the country; the wool brought in England, in 1820 and 1822, from one shilling and sixpence to one shilling and eightpence per pound, without any mixture of merino. There are now, however, no sheep of this quality amongst the common flocks; proving how much they will degenerate when left to themselves.

The common sheep of the country are very inferior; the quality and quantity of their wool, which is of all colours, being very coarse; they are also ill-shaped, long-legged, lank-bodied, and very difficult to fatten: in a word, they are a degenerate race, the consequence of total neglect. This breed may be purchased one hundred leagues south of Buenos Ayres at one current dollar each. But sheep of this quality can be of no value to the owner, the wool not being worth the expense of cartage to Buenos Ayres; and meat in those districts being absolutely valueless.

The breed of sheep found amongst the Pampas Indians, and which some years since might occasionally be purchased, is much larger, stronger, and more hardy; resembling very much the Churras, from which they have descended. They are much superior to the common breed for purposes of

improving by crossing them with fine rams ; but very few are now to be found within the limits of the province.

The first recorded introduction of merino sheep into this country took place in the year 1814, when a spirited individual, Mr. Thomas Lloyd Halsey, brought with him, at great expense and considerable difficulty, thirty-five head of merinos from Spain. The exportation of merino sheep was at that time strictly prohibited in Spain, in consequence of which he had to smuggle them across the frontier into Portugal. They were embarked at Lisbon for Rio de Janeiro, and forwarded from thence, in a Portuguese vessel, to Buenos Ayres. The enormous expenses caused by the circuitous route enhanced their value to one hundred and fifty Spanish dollars each. The climate proved very favourable, and they increased rapidly ; so much so that in 1819 the flock amounted to four hundred head. Unfortunately in that year this enterprising individual lost the well-earned fruit of his labours, and the country a valuable race of animals, by fire : the whole flock was consumed with the exception of thirty-three, some of which were wethers. The proprietor abandoned the enterprise ; the few remaining sheep got into other hands ; and most of them perished in the troubles of that period, leaving little trace of their existence in the present flocks of the province. After this unfortunate result

no attempt was made to improve the breed until the year 1824, when the government imported, through the agency of Mr. Terneau of Paris, upwards of a hundred merinos; some of which were from the celebrated establishment at Rambouillet. These fell into the hands of a native, from whom, after a few months, Mr. Harratt, together with the late Mr. Peter Sheridan, purchased them. Soon after, about eighty Southdowns were imported by the government, which chiefly fell into the hands of Mr. Capdevila. In January 1826, another importation by the government took place, consisting of seventy merinos, averaging in price a hundred dollars each: the dollar then being nearly equal to silver. This lot, and part of the former, were purchased by Mr. Harratt.

Thus the first successful attempt to improve the breed of sheep was undertaken with about two hundred head. This class of animals was held in very low estimation by the estancieros of that period; little care being taken of them, and no attempt made to improve the breed; sheep being considered an unproductive stock. Rams of all descriptions were left to run in the flocks, and not unfrequently out-numbered the ewes; as is the case at present south of the Salado.

The idea of improving a breed of animals of so little value and so lightly esteemed by every one, was ridiculed, even by the English and other foreign

estancieros, and regarded as a most unprofitable undertaking. For many years Mr. Harratt had to endure the banter of his friends and acquaintance; but had at last the satisfaction of selling sheep of the improved breed at high prices.

The outlay during five or six years was very great; the undertaking having met with no support from the public until the years 1832-3, when a few rams were sold both to natives and foreigners; but every succeeding year the value of the sheep became better known and appreciated, and occasioned a correspondingly rapid increase in the demand for breeding stock. The sale of several parcels of improved wool in Liverpool, at two shillings and two shillings and fourpence per pound, gave a great impetus to the sale of rams; and the desire of all classes of the community to become sheep-breeders became so general that it was necessary to resort to fresh importations from Europe to meet the demand. In the year 1836 the ship *Antonius* brought from Hamburg eighty animals of the Saxony breed, and in 1837 the following were imported :—

1,578	Merinos	from Saxony.
234	„	from France.
680	„	from North America.
20	„	from Liverpool.
57	New Leicesters	from Liverpool.
2,569		

The following were imported in 1838 :—

848	Merinos	from Hamburg.
400	„	from the United States.
25	„	from Spain.
36	„	*via* Monte Video.
1,309		

The blockade of the port of Buenos Ayres prevented further importations, which would no doubt have been considerable, and gave a great check to sheep-breeding in the province. The number of improved sheep is rapidly and steadily increasing, notwithstanding the great impediments caused by "blockaders" and "interventioners." The total amount of sheep in this province may be estimated at six millions; about one-third of which is of the improved breed.

A square league of land will feed from twelve to fourteen thousand sheep, divided into flocks averaging about two thousand head. Three thousand is the utmost limit which a flock ought to be allowed to reach; if it exceed that number the loss in lambs will be very great. Each flock is placed under the care of a shepherd, who has a small hut to live in, and a corral to secure the flock in case of storms. Natives have generally been employed as shepherds, with wages of from eighty to one hundred dollars currency per month.

In the year 1838, Mr. Harratt purchased a piece of land containing something more than a square league, upon which he placed as stock 3,000 ewes, under the charge of two persons, who had a share in the profit of the establishment as a remuneration for their services; the accounts being balanced annually. Natives were employed as shepherds, and the place was well managed. The extract here given will show what a farm may be made to produce under the above system. The sheep were taken after the shearing of 1838; and the following table gives the number shorn annually, the amount of wool they produced in arrobas, the value of the wool, the number of sheep sold, and what they produced, with the sheep skins and tallow which were sold annually:—

Date.	Animals Shorn.		Arrobas of Wool.	Value.	Sheep Sold.	Sheep Skins and Tallow Sold.	Total.
	Sheep.	Lambs.					
1839	2,886	1,750	544	14,712	..	849	15,561
1840	4,168	2,093	722	24,250	..	850	25,100
1841	8,020	1,251	1,038	36,197	..	890	37,087
1842	2,478	..	1,300	50,850	988	13,829	64,679
1843	10,231	..	1,492	41,994	1,270	10,004	62,000
1844	12,695	..	1,179	74,666	1,894	14,007	89,253

N.B.—An arroba is twenty-five pounds.

During the three first years, the lambs were shorn a little later than the principal shearing; this practice was discontinued after the third year, the wool being of very little value. The wool was sold in the grease during the first five years; the last year it was washed. The final column contains the total amount which the estancia produced annually; to which ought to be added the improvements made during the six years, in houses, corrals, plantations, &c., valued at thirty thousand dollars currency.

The expenses of the establishment in houses, puestos, corrals, galpones, plantations, house expenses of managers, shearing, cartage of wool to Buenos Ayres, and, in fact, every expense connected with it, were as follows :—

1839	18,500	Paper dollars.
1840	12,784	„
1841	15,309	„
1842	29,154	„
1843	26,651	„
1844	29,946	„

N.B. The last year included the expense of washing the wool on the sheeps' back.

The following is a statement of the increase of sheep, sold and consumed, and also the loss from casualties :—

Original stock		3,000
Numbers of lambs marked in six years		22,433
		25,433
Sold for the market	4,152	
Consumed in 6¼ years	6,000	
Loss from accidents	1,587	
Stock divided in December 1844.....	13,694	
		25,433

The number of lambs produced was much greater than the number marked; and with more careful shepherds the increase would have been considerably more than appears in the above statement.

It was found to be of great advantage to give the shepherds an interest in the increase of the flocks, especially those at a distance from the principal establishment. These contracts were generally for four or five years. The individuals usually selected for this purpose, were Irish labourers; to whom was given one-third of the increase and one-third of the wool, for which they took care of the flock, and paid all expenses. A flock of one thousand five hundred sheep was generally committed to them, with sufficient land to feed double that number. Other local arrangements with the *medianeros* also gave them a greater interest in the sheep.

The majority of British subjects among the

labouring class are Irish; many of them are careful men who save their earnings until they have sufficient to purchase half a flock of sheep; this they do with facility in two or three years. The number they generally wish to commence with is one thousand two hundred, or one thousand four hundred; and they require six or seven thousand dollars to purchase one-half; the value of good mestizo sheep being from eight to ten dollars each. The expense of shearing, houses, corrals, &c., is equally divided. The medianero takes care of the flock, the estanciero gives the land, and finds sufficient rams. The product of the wool is divided annually, and the sheep are equally divided at the expiration of the contract.

In this way a labouring man becomes a small proprietor in three or four years, having a good flock of sheep and a sum of money, saved from his share of wool and sheep sold during the contract, with which to commence an independent establishment. These men soon become valuable members of society; and thus a useful and industrious population is rising up in the province, as an example for their improvident neighbours.

In February, 1844, a flock of two thousand ewes was entrusted to two Irishmen, brothers; the sheep were not of the finest quality, and might be worth six dollars each. They were divided at the end of two years, early in 1846, when the proprietors

had four thousand one hundred and fifty-six head: the two years' wool produced twenty thousand paper dollars, having been sold under very favourable circumstances. They then took separate flocks of about fifteen hundred and fifty sheep each, including lambs and wethers of all ages, worth about seven dollars each.

The flock of A produced in wool:—

In 1846	6,488	dollars
In 1847	10,300	„
173 wethers sold, produced	1,557	„
	18,345	

and the flocks counted in March, 1848, two thousand six hundred: they had also increased in value; one-half the flock having been sold at eight dollars each.

The flock of B produced in wool:—

In 1846	6,325	dollars
In 1847	9,487	„
183 wethers sold, produced.....	1,380	„
	17,192	

and the flock counted in March 1848, two thousand five hundred and fifty.

C commenced in April, 1845, with a flock of three thousand sheep, for one-half of which he paid at the rate of eight dollars currency each; in January, 1847, were divided two thousand four hundred and seventy head; the wool having produced in the two years twelve thousand six hundred dollars.

D had two thousand four hundred and eighty-two sheep of all ages in March, 1846; the flock produced in wool:—

In 1846	10,887	dollars.
In 1847	19,668	„
683 wethers sold produced	7,036	„
	30,591	

and in February, 1848, were divided two thousand nine hundred and seventy-two animals.

It would be useless to multiply examples; the above ought to be sufficient to convince all that sheep-breeding may be made a very profitable business in this province.

The shearing takes place in October and November; the principal lambing season is in March, April, and May. The rams are generally left in the flocks all the year, and the lambs fall in spring and autumn; those which fall in autumn are consi-

dered the strongest. Even when the rams are taken out of the flocks, it is only to avoid the lambs coming during the three months of summer—December, January, and February; and the three winter months, June, July, and August. The flocks are allowed to lamb in spring and autumn.

During the six years preceding the recent blockade, wool was sold in Buenos Ayres (generally in the grease) at thirty-eight to forty dollars per arroba; exchange in England being threepence. It has been sold washed, at sixty to sixty-five per arroba; exchange at fourpence. The Entre Rios wool generally shipped to England has netted twenty-one shillings per arroba.

The following may be considered the present value (1848) of sheep in this province; the exchange being twopence per dollar:—

Common sheep	2 to 2½	dollars each.
Superior mestizos	4 to 5	„
Fine mestizos	8 to 10	„
Merinos	100 to 150	„

The annual expense of taking care of sheep, may be estimated at ten rials currency each animal; including rent of land one shilling and eightpence each.

In North America, the expense is 1 dol. 50 c. ..	6 0
In Saxony	4 6
And Australia (not including rent of land)	2 6

Land is frequently rented for sheep, but no uniform rate can be named, as the value varies with the locality, and, in many instances, with the idea of the owner; some proprietors exacting double what others are willing to take. In Mr. Harratt's neighbourhood, one thousand, and even one thousand two hundred dollars have been paid annually, for sufficient land to feed a flock of three thousand sheep; and in other parts of the country, there are instances of as good land being obtained for six or seven hundred dollars. The average rate for a flock is from eight hundred to one thousand dollars per annum.

The expense of shearing fine sheep, including the purchase of shears and twine, and making up the wool, will amount to two rials and a half per head: the shearers are paid eighteen to twenty dollars per hundred head.

There is no disease indigenous to the country amongst sheep. Before the introduction of foreign sheep, the flocks were remarkably healthy: free from foot-rot, scab, and every infectious disease; though an animal occasionally died of hydatid.

With the importations of 1836 and 1837, came the foot-rot. This disease was very virulent in the flocks when first attacked, half the sheep going upon their knees; but it is no longer formidable: a few sheep become lame after a continuance of wet

weather, but the majority of them get well after a week of dry weather: a flock is kept free from this disease with very little attention. The scab was also introduced at the above period (it is thought, from England), and occasioned considerable alarm amongst the sheep-breeders: this also is dying away; the heat of the summer drying up the insects as they make their appearance, leaving the flock almost free from the disease. A few sheep, with broken fleeces, are seen a little before shearing, about August or September: but the disease is fast disappearing; and it was never fatal to sheep in its worst stages.

Wool and sheepskins being both free from export duty, the custom-house returns of the quantity shipped are by no means correct. The amount of wool exported from and grown in this province, may amount to two hundred and fifty thousand arrobas (of 25 lb. each): and of sheep-skins a hundred thousand to one hundred and fifty thousand dozens.

A puesto is a place where a flock of sheep is kept at a distance from the principal establishment, which is called an estancia.

A mestizo sheep of a good quality will give annually in wool $3\frac{1}{4}$ to $3\frac{1}{2}$ lb. in the grease, and about $2\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of washed wool: the common sheep of the country will not give more than 2 lb. in the grease, and not more than $1\frac{1}{2}$ lb. if washed.

The only English breed of sheep which thrives in this country is the South Down; the Leicester have not prospered. Those who have tried the breed, have always after some time given it up. There is no estancia in the province with a breed of Leicester sheep, either pure or crossed, of any value.

The major part of the wool is shorn in the grease; but the number of sheep which have had the wool washed on the back has increased very much of late years. Some swim their sheep, others adopt washing by the hand; the latter method is to be preferred, by which the wool is more equally and better washed, and the sheep are not so much harassed as by swimming.

The most suitable place for an estancia or cattle farm is where the ground is undulating and well watered by permanent streams, and which grows a variety of grass. The most general are el trebol (trefoil), la gramilla, el capigni, la cebadilla (or wild barley), la cola de sorro (or fox tail), and the endless variety of grasses characterized as *strong*. These latter are not found in the lands that have been many years grazed by horned cattle, but only in those that have been very little frequented, or in virgin lands where horned cattle have never been. Strong grasses are most permanent during the droughts which so often occur in this country; but on the others all classes of cattle fatten more quickly and in a much greater degree.

The lands in general are divided by suertes de estancia, each having 3,000 varas (yards) of front, and 9,000 varas in depth: that is, half a league in width, by a league and a half in length; or else by square leagues of 6,000 varas. It will be borne in mind, that a Spanish square league contains about 6,000 English acres.

The most elevated site is generally selected for the dwelling-house—some hill or rising ground near to the water, and equally distant from both sides of the estancia. Close to the house is situated the corral, which serves, when necessary, to shut up the cattle. This enclosure is generally sixty or seventy yards square, encircled by strong posts, and having an entrance of six or seven yards wide, secured by a bar of wood drawn across. The number of puestos, or stations for the herdsmen, depends upon the extent of the land, and the situation of the watering-places. In general they are placed on the outer edges of the land: those near the watering-places should have the corrals to enclose all classes of cattle in that neighbourhood; puestos which have no watering-places being only designed to prevent the cattle from straying to the neighbouring lands.

When cattle are bought for the purpose of establishing an estancia (for example, 1,000 head of horned cattle, male and female, young and old), a capataz (head man) is sent with nine or ten men, each provided with four to six horses and several

rodomones (half-tamed horses), according to the distance they may have to travel, in search of the cattle. Upon completing the purchase, the cattle are driven from eight to ten leagues daily; with intervals to allow them to feed, wherever good pastures and water are met with during the day. At the close of each day's journey, and before sunset, if they should approach an estancia having a large corral, leave is asked, and the cattle are shut in for the night. If at the resting-place there should be neither estancia nor corral, they then drive the cattle closely together. The herdsmen remain on horseback all night to take care of them; they then divide into two parties, relieving each other during the night. When the weather is warm, and there is moonlight, they travel by night, and rest during the day. At the end of each day's journey, they kill a calf or fat heifer, and kindle a fire of dried weeds, bones, and the suet and fat of the animal; which is roasted whole, with the skin upon it (carne con cuero): this is the only aliment desired by the men, except maté, which they always carry with them. These stopping-places are always near rivulets, in order to have water for both men and cattle.

On arriving at the estancia to be established, in order to *aquerenciarlas* the cattle—that is, to accustom them to the new lands—they are allowed to graze during the day, under the care of the herdsmen; and before sunset they are shut up in the corral. In

this way they are kept for three or six months, according to the state of the land, and its greater or less distance from their former *querencia*, or old pastures. This unremitting care is continued until the cattle become reconciled to their new pastures, when they are allowed to roam at pleasure day and night.

The usual routine in the daily management of the estancia is very simple. It is the duty of the herdsmen to drive the cattle every morning to a certain spot called the *rodeo*, where they are accustomed to assemble for one or two hours; they so soon acquire this habit, that when any of the herdsmen gallop shouting through the plains, the cattle will be seen running from all directions towards the rodeo, where they will remain for some time of their own accord.

There is a very singular feature in the natural history of these animals worthy of observation: no matter how large the number of cattle may be on the same grounds, they all instinctively subdivide themselves into small herds, of perhaps fifty to one hundred and fifty, which always keep together, as companions, and are technically called "points." If thousands of animals should assemble together on the rodeo, they may be observed to gather together in "points" or companies; each *point* being composed of its own bulls, cows, and calves. When cattle submit to be driven to the *rodeo*, they are considered

tame; but if they flee from the approach of men they are considered wild. Upon a well-managed estancia not more than three thousand are allowed to assemble on the same rodeo.

If the herdsmen have wives or daughters who know how to make cheese or butter, they usually get permission to domesticate cows for that purpose; one half the profit going to their owners, who also find the necessary utensils; the other half rewarding the woman for her labour: but, in consequence of the general indolence of the people, milk is seldom seen in the country. The cows do not allow themselves to be milked in the same manner as in England: at the time of milking, the calf first draws the milk for a few minutes, it is then removed, and the cow continues to give her milk freely; if the calf be killed, or withdrawn from the cow, the milk ceases to flow. This fact would tend to show that the continued secretion of milk by the cows in Europe, has been produced by a habit continued for ages; in their wild state, nature supplies milk no longer than for the purpose of yielding nutriment to their young: in this country, the cattle have been so long neglected that they have reverted to their natural habits.

The number of horned cattle maintained upon a square league varies considerably, according to the quality of the land, and the ability of its proprietor. In the south of this province, where the

lands are lessened in their value by *pajonalis*, (coarse sedge grass), and *bañados*, (low lands inundated by rain), it is generally reputed necessary to have a league square for every 1,000 cattle; but in the north, where the lands are of a superior quality, a league maintains from two to three thousand head of horned cattle, from four to five hundred horses, and from four to five thousand sheep.

In all calculations, the annual increase of horned cattle is estimated at 34 to 35 per cent., but it is often 40 per cent.; so that with 1,000 head of tame cattle, 400 calves may be marked in the season. The greater part of the calving is in the months of August, September, and October; and they are usually marked in March and April. If the calves are castrated at the time of marking, when they are only from five to ten months old, they never grow large, but become fat, and are therefore preferred by the butchers for the market. The owners of saladeros, however, prefer those castrated at two or three years old; for although not so fat, they are more fleshy, and the hide is heavier.

At the time of marking, the cattle are collected during daylight upon the rodeo, and a few tame animals, such as working oxen or milch cows, stationed at about two hundred yards off; three mounted men are then placed to keep those together upon the rodeo; and two more are sent to take care of the tame animals; other horsemen, in

groups of three or four, begin to bring out the animals at the speed of their horses. This operation is continued until the desired number has been obtained, when they are then driven to the corral, the tame animals serving as guides; there they lazo the calves, and stamp them with the hot brand. This concluded, the calves are left shut up in the corral all night to rest; next morning the cattle upon the rodeo are collected, and the calves driven from the corral to re-unite them again. The owner of every estancia has a mark for his animals; formerly these marks were kept registered, and duly published: the justices of the peace, and other civil authorities, being furnished with a copy, that they might at once discover the owner of any stolen or strayed animal; but this very useful precaution is at present neglected.

END OF VOL. I.

8 1 5
12
971
1

University of California
SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
305 De Neve Drive - Parking Lot 17 • Box 951388
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90095-1388
Return this material to the library from which it was borrowed.

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY
AA 000 917 585 2

L.L.

sity of Cal
thern Regi
brary Facil